THE
NĀRADA-PURĀNA

PART V

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CHAPTER THIRTYEIGHT

The greatness of the Gaṅgā[1]

Vasiṣṭha said :

1. O leading king, that Vasu who was engaged in what was beneficial to all the worlds, spoke these soft words to Mohinī, beloved of his Yājya (patron whose sacrifices Vasu performed).

Vasu said :

2. O Mohinī, listen. I shall narrate the characteristics of the holy places severally. On understanding them, the sinners can have the most excellent salvation instantaneously.

3. On the surface of the Earth, the most excellent of all the sacred places is the Gaṅgā. There is nothing else which is as destructive of sins as the Gaṅgā.

4. On hearing these words of Vasu, her own priest, Mohinī who had great respect for a holy dip in the Gaṅgā, bowed to him and said :

Mohini said :

5. O holy sir, the most excellent Brāhmaṇa, now kindly recount the excellent greatness of the Gaṅgā, acknowledged by the Purāṇas.

6. After hearing the unequalled grandeur of the Gaṅgā that is destructive of sins, I shall go alongwith you, to take holy bath in that river that destroys all sins.

7. Those lands, countries, mountains and the hermitages are very holy if the sacred Gaṅgā is ever adjacent to them.

1. Though Gaṅgā is mentioned in the *Nadī-Sūkta* of the ṚV. X. 75. 5-6, it was in the age of Epics and Purāṇas that it came to be looked upon as the holiest of rivers. The Mbh. and other Purāṇas are vying with one another in singing the glory of the Gaṅgā (and borrowing such verses from each other). As this section of the NP. deals with pilgrimage to holy places, it is meet that it should start with the glory of the Gaṅgā.

8. On hearing those words of Mohinī, Vasu who was conversant with the Purāṇas recounted the greatness of the Gaṅgā that is destructive of sins.

Vasu said :

9. A creature (living soul) does not attain by means of austerities, celibacy, Yajñas or renunciation, that state of existence or salvation which it may derive after resorting to the Gaṅgā.

10. Those men also who commit sins in the early years of their lives but resort to the Gaṅgā during the later years, attain great salvation.

11. The man who stands on a single leg for a thousand years (by way of penance), and the man who takes his holy dip into the Gaṅgā for only a month, —these two attain equal benefits.

12. By way of penance a man may stand topsy-turvy for ten thousand Yugas. But, if a man stands on the Gaṅgā in any manner as he pleases he is superior to the former.

13. In the case of living beings there (in the world), whose minds are afflicted by misery and who are in search of salvation, there is no other place like the Gaṅgā.

14. The Gaṅgā may redeem per force those base men who are sinful on account of great and terrible sins. It will prevent them from going to the impure hell.

15. Those who always go near Gaṅgā that is liked even by the gods, are certainly on a par with the sages and the Devas including their king Indra.

16. On every occasion, the Gaṅgā is resorted to by the Devas including Indra, by sages and by human beings, for the sake of flourishing prosperity. The Gaṅgā has an immense cosmic form. It may sanctify even blind men, senseless men and the indigent ones.

17-19. O Mohinī, in the beginning of the dark half of the month, the Gaṅgā is present on Earth for ten days ending with the sacred Amāvāsyā day. From the first to the tenth of the bright half of the month, it is present in the nether-worlds by itself. Beginning with the eleventh day in the

bright half and ending with the fifth day (in the dark half), she is always present in heaven for ten days.

20. In the Kṛtayuga all sacred places are alike. In the Tretā the Puṣkara lake is the greatest, in the Dvāpara Kurukṣetra is the holiest centre and in the Kali age the Gaṅgā is superior to all other holy places.[1]

21. In the Kali age, the holy centres and sacred rivers cast off (deposit) their prowess in the Gaṅgā naturally. But the divine Gaṅgā does not cast it off anywhere else.

22. Even those men who are habitually interested in sinful actions attain the greatest goal, even if they are touched with the wind blowing from a person wet with the drops of waters from the Gaṅgā.

23. There is no doubt that he who is Lord Viṣṇu, Janārdana, embodiment of consciousness and all-pervading himself assumes the liquid form, it is then called the Gaṅgā water.

24. The murderer of a Brāhmaṇa, the slayer of his preceptor, the slaughterer of a cow, the thief and the defiler of the preceptor's bed are sanctified by the waters of the Gaṅgā. No doubt need be entertained in this respect.

25. The water of the Gaṅgā shall dispel one's sin committed till one's death, if it is used as it is in a holy centre, or if it is taken out elsewhere or if it is taken in hot or cold weather.

26. Ordinary water kept overnight is to be avoided. The leaf or flower petal kept overnight is to be avoided, but not so in the case of the water of the Gaṅgā or the leaf of Tulasī, the holy basil plant.

27. No one has the power to count the gold pieces or the jewels in mount Meru or to describe the extent of the special merits of the waters of the Gaṅgā.

28. Even if a man does not fulfil the procedure laid down for the performance of pilgrimage, he too shall benefit by it, thanks to the greatness of the waters of the Gaṅgā.

1. The same as *Mbh. Vana* 85.90. Also *Kūrma* I. 27.37 except for Kṛta-Yuga.

29. The drops of waters of the Gaṅgā are superior to many wish-yielding jewels, since they grant the devotees whatever benefit they desire.

30. Even if a person gargles once with the waters of the Gaṅgā devoutly, he enjoys in heaven the divine juices originating from the udders of the wish-yielding cow.

31. He who sprinkles the Gaṅgā water on the Śālagrāma stone, shines like the sun that dispels dense darkness at the time of rising.

32. There is no doubt that a man who is engulfed in different sins originating from (or committed by) mind, words, or body becomes purified on seeing the Gaṅgā.

33. He who always partakes of alms sprinkled with the Gaṅgā water, sheds off all sins like the serpent that casts off its slough.

34. Heaps of sinful vicious actions as big as the Himālayas or the Vindhya mountains perish through the waters of the Gaṅgā like misfortunes through devotion to Viṣṇu.

35. At the very moment when men devoutly enter the Gaṅgā for taking ablution, their sins of Brāhmaṇa slaughter etc. cry out 'Alas !' and disappear.

36. The man who continuously stays on the banks of the Gaṅgā, and who drinks the water of the Gaṅgā always shall be liberated from the sins accumulated before.

37. Verily, he who, resorting to the Gaṅgā, always stays there fearlessly, deserves to be worshipped by gods, mortals and great sages.

38. Of what avail is the Yoga with its eight ancillaries ? Of what use are the austerities ? Of what advantage are the sacrifices ? The residence on the banks of the Gaṅgā alone is superior to them all in every respect.

39. Why should you go in for many Yajñas, words of Japas, austerities and gifts of wealth ? For, the Gaṅgā that can be easily served and that bestows heavenly pleasures and salvation is present nearby.

40. By means of Yajñas, observances, restraints, charitable gifts and renunciation one does not attain that benefit which one attains by resorting to the Gaṅgā.

41. The benefit that a man derives at Prabhāsa by giving away a thousand cows when the sun is swallowed by Rāhu (i.e. at the time of solar eclipse), can be derived by taking bath in the Gaṅgā by a single day.

42. If a man is desirous of liberation, he must eschew other means and decisively stay happily on the banks of the Gaṅgā. Only then can he be the object of salvation.

43. In Vārāṇasī particularly, the Gaṅgā bestows liberation immediately. Every month, on the eighth or fourteenth day, it confers emancipation from Saṁsāra.

44-45a. The residence on the banks of the Gaṅgā as long as one lives, is the bestower of final beatitude. On the banks of the Gaṅgā, one obtains that benefit and happiness which is usually obtained after performing Kṛcchra rites or the Cāndrāyaṇa expiation always.

45b-46a. O daughter of Brahmā, even by hundreds of sacrifices it is not possible to obtain the benefit that one gets in half a day by being devoted to the service of Gaṅgā.

46b-47a. By staying on the banks of the Gaṅgā with devotion, one gets that benefit which is obtained by all these rites viz. Yajña, austerities, charitable gifts, Yaugic practice and recitation of the Vedic passages.

47b-48a. By staying on the bank of the Gaṅgā that merit is obtained which life-long Brahmacārins (those who have taken the vow of celibacy) get through truthful words and which those who perform Agnihotra get.

48b-49a. Devotion to the Gaṅgā certainly redeems infinite crores of families belonging to the mother, father, and wife from the ocean of worldly existence.

49b-50. The devotee of the Gaṅgā attains contentment, great power and prosperity, knowledge of truth, happiness of the soul and the acquisition of humility and good conduct. Only by resorting to the Gaṅgā does a man become contented and blessed.

51-52a. There is no doubt about this that even after death he will be its devotee and engrossed in devotion. The man who devoutly touches its waters and drinks them, obtains the means of salvation without any strain.

52b-53. These men rejoice in the presence of Śiva, viz. the man who gets initiated in the Yajñas; the man who drinks Soma juice every day;the man whose rites are always performed through the waters of the Gaṅgā. They eschew their bodies and rejoice in the presence of Śiva.

54. Just as Indra and other Devas imbibe the nectarine juice present in the moon and the sun, so also men drink the Gaṅgā water through their mouths.

55-56. By drinking a handful of the Gaṅgā water, one derives hundred times the merits of the gifts of virgins (in marriage), plots of lands, cooked rice, cows, gold and other metals, chariots, horses and elephants (all gifts being) duly devoutly performed.

57. A benefit more than what is glorified in the case of thousands of Cāndrāyaṇa observance, is obtained by drinking the waters of the Gaṅgā.

58. If one drinks a mouthful of the Gaṅgā water, one attains the benefit of a horse-sacrifice. Salvation is within the grasp of that person who drinks the water of the Gaṅgā freely.

59. The water of the Sarasvatī becomes stale in three months; that of the Yamunā in seven months, that of the Narmadā in ten months and that of the Gaṅgā in a year.

60. If in the case of any dead person the obsequies and the water libations are not performed in accordance with the injunctions in the scriptures, they can have the subsequent benefit by casting the bones in the Gaṅgā.

61. Of the two—one performing a thousand Cāndrāyaṇa Vratas (vows) subjecting himself to bodily strain and the other drinking the Gaṅgā water as he pleases—it is the latter that excels the former.

62. He who sees, eulogises and bathes in the Gaṅgā and he who drinks water of the Gaṅgā, attains heavenly pleasures, pure knowledge, Yogic power and salvation.

63. He who drinks water of the Gaṅgā warmed by the rays of the sun gains merits. The drinking of the Gaṅgā water is superior to the partaking of barley grains soaked in cow's urine.

CHAPTER THIRTYNINE

The Glory of Ablution in the Gaṅgā

Vasu said :

1. "O Mohinī listen. I shall recount to you the meritorious benefit of seeing the Gaṅgā as mentioned in the Purāṇas by sages, the seers of the Truth.

2. Just as the serpents become devoid of poison at the sight of Tārkṣya (Garuḍa), so also one is liberated from sins at the sight of the Gaṅgā.

3. By seeing, touching and plunging into the Gaṅgā, a man redeems seven subsequent generations, seven earlier generations as well as other manes beyond them.

4. By seeing, touching, and drinking the waters of the Gaṅgā and by glorifying the name Gaṅgā, a man sanctifies hundreds and thousands of persons in his family.

5. The benefits originating from seeing the Gaṅgā are perfect knowledge, unequalled lordship and prowess, establishment of auspicious Āśramas (stages of life), longevity and renown.

6. By the mere sight of the Gaṅgā, all these (the following) perish viz.—the frivolousness of the sense-organs, vices, sins and ruthlessness.

7. Violence towards others, crookedness, looking at others' faults etc and the hypocrisy of men, perish by the mere sight of the Gaṅgā.

8. If a man wishes for the permanent unchanging region (Mokṣa) may he see (the Gaṅgā) frequently; may he touch it with devotion again and again.

9. By the sight of the Gaṅgā one attains the same merit as one gets elsewhere through the digging and construction of tanks, wells, lakes, watering sheds, asylums, etc.

10. By looking at the Gaṅgā with devotional feelings, one attains the same benefit as is obtained in visualizing the great Ātman.

11-12a. The great sages say that in the Kali age, by the mere sight of the Gaṅgā, a man obtains the same benefit as one obtains by resorting to taking bath in or touching (the

sacred waters) in Naimiṣa, Kurukṣetra, Narmadā and Puṣkara.

12b-13a. Henceforth, O beautiful wife of the king, I shall recount to you the benefit of remembering the Gaṅgā as glorified in the Purāṇas.

13b-14a. Even when it is remembered from a far distance, the Gaṅgā uplifts people falling into the hell or sinking into the ocean of worldly existence and endowed with inauspicious Karmans.

14b-15a. Man who remembers the Gaṅgā from the distance of thousands of Yojanas away from it, attains the greatest salvation, although he may be a man of vicious activities.[1]

15b-16a. Through the remembrance of the Gaṅgā, the cage of multitudes of sins breaks into a thousand pieces like a mountain when struck with the thunderbolt.

16b-18a. He who always remembers the Gaṅgā while walking, standing, sleeping, meditating, waking, eating, laughing or crying becomes liberated from bondage.[2] Those who devoutly remember the Gaṅgā though stationed a thousand Yojanas away, and shout out "Gaṅgā, Gaṅgā" are released from sins.

18b-19a. Those who remember the Gaṅgā, those who are devotedly attached to the Gaṅgā are liberated wholly from great sins. There is no doubt in this.

19b-20a. These are the benefits of remembering the Gaṅgā viz. obtaining houses of variegated nature, different kinds of ornaments, women, absence of ailments, and plenty of riches.

20b-21a. The man who mentally remembers the Gaṅgā even while staying far off, certainly attains the benefit of observances of a thousand Cāndrāyaṇa rites.

21b-22. One who repeats the name "Gaṅgā, Gaṅgā" even when stationed a hundred Yojanas away, is liberated from all sins.[3] He goes to the world of Viṣṇu. By glorifying the

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1. VP. II. 8. 121; Pd. P. VI. 8; *Brahma* 175.82 with slight variations.
2. The same as Skanda IV. 1. 27. 37.
3. Mt. P. 104.14.

Gaṅgā, he is liberated from sins. By seeing the Gaṅgā one derives auspiciousness.

23. By taking bath into the Gaṅgā and by drinking its water, a man sanctifies upto the seventh generation in his family. He sanctifies seven earlier generations, seven subsequent generations and seven generations beyond these.

24-25a. When glorified even casually, the Gaṅgā redeems persons. Even he who carelessly or with lack of faith mentions the name of the holy river Gaṅgā becomes the beneficiary of heavenly pleasures.

25b-26a. Whatever may be the plight one is in, even if one is devoid of all holy acts and rites, one attains auspicious goal and salvation merely by glorifying the Gaṅgā.

26b-27a. Even if he is a Brāhmaṇa-slayer, or the murderer of his preceptor or the slaughterer of a cow or one who is defiled by all sorts of sins, a man is liberated from sins by drinking the water of the Gaṅgā.

27b-28a. "When shall I see the Gaṅgā ? When shall I be able to take my bath in it ?" If a man desires earnestly like this, the Gaṅgā redeems a hundred families.

28b-30a. Henceforth, O gentle lady, I shall recount to you the meritorious benefit of ablution in the Gaṅgā. On hearing this, one is liberated from all sins. There is no doubt in this. O Mohinī, the sin of a person who takes his bath in the waters of the Gaṅgā perishes immediately. He will immediately acquire unprecedented merits.

30b-32a. The prosperity that is attained by those men of pure souls who take bath in the pure waters of the Gaṅgā is not obtained even by hundreds of sacrifices. Just as, on rising, the sun dispels dense darkness and shines brilliantly, so also one who is sprinkled with the water of the Gaṅgā dispels sins and shines brightly.

32b-33. O beautiful wife of the king, a man certainly derives the benefit of horse-sacrifice even with a single bath in the Gaṅgā, if it is taken in accordance with injunctions. By the mere ablution n the Gaṅgā, the sins of a man accumulated
many births, perish.

34. He becomes the object of merit immediately. Sins committed in other places perish on the banks of the Gaṅgā.

35. Sins committed on the banks of the Gaṅgā perish as a result of the bath in the Gaṅgā. One gets the merit of a horse-sacrifice by taking bath assiduously in the Gaṅgā by day or by night or during Sandhyā (twilight).

36-37a. One can take one's bath at home with the water taken from the Gaṅgā. There is no doubt in this that a man derives from bath in the Gaṅgā that benefit which one gets in all the holy centres and favourite temples.

37b-38. A man burdened with great sins or with all sins is liberated from all of them through bath in the Gaṅgā duly performed. There has never been a greater ablution than one in the Gaṅgā nor will it ever be.

39. Especially in the Kali yuga, the Gaṅgā dispels sins after destroying defects originating from lust, mentally, physically or verbally.

40-41a. By taking bath in Gaṅgā with great devotion, one rejoices in heaven like a god. The man who devotedly bathes in the Gaṅgā for a year, can stay in the world of Viṣṇu for a Kalpa.

41b-42. The man who takes bath in the Gaṅgā every day till his death is absolved of all sins. In the company of all the members of his family, he is honoured in the world of Viṣṇu and is blessed with all sorts of pleasures.

43-44a. He is honoured there for the period of two Parārdhas. No doubt need be entertained in this regard. He who continuously and daily takes bath in the Gaṅgā is a liberated soul during his life-time. When dead, he attains Viṣṇu's region.

44b-45. The merit of bath at midday is ten times that of bath in the morning. The bath in the evening has hundred times the merit. In the presence of Śiva the merit of the bath is infinite. The bath in the Gaṅgā excels even a crore of charitable gifts of tawny-coloured cows.

46. Wherever you perform ablution in it, the Gaṅgā yields the same benefit as the ablution at Kurukṣetra. It

bestows more benefit when bathed at Haridvāra, Prayāga and at the place where it meets with the sea.[1]

47. These are the words of the sun. "O Gaṅgā those who take bath in your waters heated by my rays, pierce my disc and attain salvation."

48. Varuṇa said to Gaṅgā.

"He who glorifies you while taking bath in his house, goes to the heaven."

CHAPTER FORTY

The Fruit of Ablution in Different Holy Centres

Vasu said :

1. O woman of beautiful thighs, henceforth I shall recount to you the benefit of ablution in Gaṅgā on special occasions. Listen attentively.

2. The man who continuously takes bath in the Gaṅgā in the month of Māgha shall stay in the world of Indra (i.e. heaven) for a long time along with all the members of his family.

3-4. Thereafter, he goes to the city of god Brahmā and stays there for hundreds and crores of Kalpas. The man who continuously takes bath duly in the Gaṅgā for six months taking meals only once a day, or the man who takes bath once in the Gaṅgā during Uttarāyaṇa (northern transit of the sun) goes to Viṣṇu's region, redeeming hundred members of his family.

5. The man who takes bath in the waters of the Gaṅgā in the course of all the Saṅkrāntis (transits of the sun from one sign of the zodiac to another) goes to the abode of Viṣṇu, seated in chariot having the lustre of the sun.

1. *Garuḍa* I. 81-1-2, Pd. P. V. 60.120

6. There have been announced (in scriptures) special benefits (in taking baths) during the equinoxes and tropical transits. They know that the benefit of ablution in the Gaṅgā during the month of Kārttika is like that of performing a penance.

7. O Mohinī, the lotus-seated deity (god) Brahmā and others say that the holy dip in the Gaṅgā when the sun enters the Aries or on the full moon day in the month of Kārttika is superior to the holy bath during the month of Māgha.

8. Your father has stated that the benefit of ablution for the whole of the year is obtained if the bath is taken on the Akṣaya tithi (i.e. third day in the bright half of Vaiśākha), the month of Kārttika or the month of Vaiśākha.

9. O wife of my Yājya, the benefit obtained by taking bath in the course of the three months (i.e. Māgha, Kārttika and Vaiśākha) is the same as that of the bath in the Gaṅgā water on the Manvādi days and the Yugādi days (i.e. days marking the anniversary of Manvantaras and Yugas).

10. Rare indeed is a holy bath in the Gaṅgā when Śravaṇa constellation coincides with Dvādaśī, or Puṣya star is in conjunction with Aṣṭamī (eighth day) or the Ārdrā star is in conjunction with Caturdaśī (fourteenth day) of the lunar fortnight.

11. The full moon day in the month of Vaiśākha is highly meritorious; so also in the months of Kārttika and Māgha. Rare indeed are the new moon days in these months for the holy bath in the Gaṅgā.

12a. If the merit in all the Parvans is hundred-fold, that on the Aṣṭamī day in the dark half (of Bhādrapada) is a thousandfold.

12b-14. O Chaste lady, on the New Moon day and the eighth day in the dark half of the month of Māgha, there is a special hundredfold merit. There is the Ardhodaya Parva*

*According to the Mbh. quoted in the *Nirṇaya Sindhu* 211, when there is *Śravaṇa Nakṣatra* and *Vyatīpāta yoga* on the new Moon day of Pauṣa (accordin to *Amānta* reckoning) or Māgha (according to Pūrṇimānta

on the New moon day of Māgha and when there is a slight deficiency (when one of the requirements for the Ardhodaya Parva is lacking), there is the Mahodaya Parva. The bath at Mahodaya Parva yields hundred-fold merits, whilst that at the time of the Ardhodaya Parva is stated as yielding a hundred thousand-fold benefit in merits. O gentle lady, if the bath is taken in the waters of the Gaṅgā during the eclipse of the sun or the moon, it yields high benefits. If the bath is taken in the months of Phālguna and Āṣāḍha, it has the benefit of ablution for three months.

15. If the bath is taken in the Gaṅgā devoutly, when the constellation under which one is born, occurs on the day, sins accumulated since one's birth are annihilated.

16. For taking ablutions in the Gaṅgā, rare indeed is the Yoga (specific astronomical period) called Vyatīpāta* on the fourteenth day in the dark half of the month of Māgha; so also is rare the Vaidhṛti Yoga **especially on the Kṛṣṇāṣṭamī (the eighth day in the dark half of Bhādrapada.)

17-18a. If a man takes bath every day at dawn throughout the month of Māgha in accordance with the injunctions, he shall become Jātismara (one who can recall incidents of the previous births). He shall certainly become perfectly conversant with the scriptural topics and also free from ailments.

18b-20a. If a man willingly takes bath in the Gaṅgā during the days of transit, during the last days of the fortnights and during the eclipses of the sun and the moon, he shall attain the abode of Brahmā. The benefit of the (bath at the time of Lunar eclipse is a hundred thousand times and that at the

reckoning which the NP follows), that is called *Ardhodaya*. When one of above requirements is absent it becames *Mahodaya—Parva-Kriyā-sāra-Samuccaya*, p. 30.

*There are two types of *Vyatīpātas* : (1) The one in the dark half is the New Moon day on Sunday, the moon being on the first quarter of any of the following *Nakṣatras*—Aśvinī, Śravaṇa, Dhaniṣṭhā, Āśleṣā. (ii) The second is on the 12th day, the day's Nakṣatra being Hasta, the planets Jupiter and Mars in the Leo and the Sun in the Aries.

**_Vaidhṛti_ is the 27th Yoga similar to Vyatīpāta, with a difference (*vide Sūrya Siddhānta* XI.I)

time of the solar eclipse is ten times that. But if it is performed on the banks of the Gaṅgā, the benefit of the lunar eclipse is a crore times and that of the solar eclipse is ten times that.

20b-c. If the thirteenth day in the dark half of the month of Caitra accompanied by the constellation pertaining to Varuṇa viz. Śata-bhiṣaj is obtained in the Gaṅgā, it is their equal to hundreds of solar eclipses.

21. It was on the tenth day in the bright half of the month of Jyeṣṭha, when the day of the week was Tuesday and the constellation was Hasta, that Gaṅgā descended to the mortal world. On that Tithi, Gaṅgā dispels sins. It yields merits hundred times those of horse sacrifices.

22. (The devotee must say thus) "O Gaṅgā, I have come on the day of Govinda Dvādaśī, dispel the multitudes of great sins that I have."

23-24. When the constellation is Maghā and it is the full moon day and the moon and Jupiter are in the same zodiac, that Tithi is stated to be great. If the day is obtained in the Gaṅgā (i.e. if the ablution in the Gaṅgā is possible on that day) it is on a par with hundreds of solar eclipses.

Henceforth, the benefit of the holy dip (in Tīrthas) in different lands is being mentioned :

25.[1] Bath in the Gaṅgā may be taken anywhere at random; it has ten times the benefit (if taken at) Kurukṣetra; in the place where it is associated with the Vindhya, it has hundred times the benefit of Kurukṣetra.

26-27. The Gaṅgā at the city of Kāśī has the merit hundred times than that of Vindhya. The Gaṅgā is difficult of access everywhere. In three places it is all the more so, viz. in Gaṅgādvāra, in Prayāga and at the place where it meets with the ocean. Those who take bath in these places go to heaven. Those who die here are not reborn. (i.e. attain Mokṣa)

28. Listen to the meritorious benefit of ablution in the Gaṅgā at Gaṅgādvāra, and Kuśāvarta. It is the same as that of seven Rājasūya sacrifices or two horse-sacrifices.

1. Mt. P. 106.54; *Kūrma* I. 37.54.

29. Learned men know that by residing there for half a month, one derives the benefit of six 'Viśvajit' sacrifices or that of the charitable gift of a hundred thousand cows.

30. By worshipping etc. Lord Viṣṇu at the excellent lake (Kuśāvarta) and god Rudra who abides at Kanakhala or by taking bath into the Gaṅgā at these places, one attains inexhaustible fund of merits.

31. O auspicious lady, listen. There is the highly meritorious holy centre named Śaukara wherein formerly Acyuta manifested himself in the form of a Divine Boar.

32. By visiting this holy centre and bathing therein a man attains the benefit of a hundred 'Agnicit' sacrifices (Agnihotras) or two Jyotiṣṭomas or a thousand Agniṣṭomas.

33. If a man takes bath there itself in the Tīrtha of Brahmā, he obtains the merit of ten thousand Jyotiṣṭomas and three-horse sacrifices.

34. O Mohinī, the Tīrtha (holy centre) named Kubjā is a pure one. All ailments perish here. So also the sins committed throughout life, perish there.

35. There is another Tīrtha here called Kāpila. O auspicious lady, a man who takes bath here derives a benefit equal to that of religious gift of eighty thousand Kapilā (tawny-coloured) cows.

36. By taking holy dip in Gaṅgā-Dvāra Kuśāvarta, Bilvaka, Nīlaparvata and in Kanakhala, a man shakes off his sins and attains heaven.

37. Thereafter is the holy centre designated as 'Pavitra'. It is the most excellent of all excellent Tīrthas. By taking holy dip there, a man obtains the benefit of two 'Viśvajit' sacrifices.

38. Thereafter is the holy centre called Veṇīrājya where the highly meritorious Sarayū joins the holy Gaṅgā like a sister meeting with her sister.

39. The Gaṅgā has become the celestial river inasmuch as it washes the right foot of Hari resembling a lotus. The

Sarayū born of the Mānasa lake* originates from his left foot.

40. Worshipping Rudra or Viṣṇu in that holy centre the worshipper shall attain oneness with Viṣṇu. The holy dip there is glorified as yielding the benefit of five horse-sacrifices.

41. Thereafter is the holy centre Gaṇḍaka and (the river) Gaṇḍakī flow there (in the Gaṅgā). The charitable gift of a thousand cows and the holy dip there—both are equal.

42-44a. Thereafter is the holy centre Rāmatīrtha. Vaikuṇṭha is near it. Thereafter is the holy centre Somatīrtha, where sage Nakula worshipped and meditated on Śiva and attained a position as the attendant of Śiva. Then there is the meritorious holy centre Campaka where the Gaṅgā flows in a northerly direction. It is equal to Maṇikarṇikā and is destructive of great sins.

44b-45a. Thereafter is the holy centre Kalaśa. Sage Agastya born of a Kalaśa (pot) worshipped Rudra there and became an excellent sage.

45b-46a. The holy centre Somadvīpa is highly meritorious and is equal to Vārāṇasī. Soma (the moon) worshipped Īśa (Rudra)there and so was held by him on his head.

46b-47a. Viśvāmitra's sister, Satyavatī (?) mingled with the Gaṅgā there. The man who takes holy dip there, shall be the favourite guest of Indra.

47b-52a. O Mohinī, the man who takes holy dip in the great Tīrtha called Jahnuhrada** certainly becomes the redeemer of twentyone generations of his family. Thereafter is the holy centre called Adititīrtha. It was here tnat Aditi

*Though the Sarayū rises in the mountains of Kumaun, according to a legend in the *Mbh-Anuśāsana* 155.23-24, while the Gaṅgā was going to Kailāsa, Vasiṣṭha brought her to the Mānasa lake. But the Gaṅgā broke the bank of the lake and flowed forth. Hence it came to be known as the sarayū: *'saro bhinnas tayā nadyā sarayūḥ sā tato'bhavat | Ibid* 24a.

**Prob. at Jahnu's Āśrama at Sultangunj to the west of Bhagalpur B.C. Law (*Historical Geography of Ancient India*, p. 223.

bore Hari to Kaśyapa. O blessed lady, they say that the holy dip there is Mahodaya (having great rise) (i.e. yielding great results). Then there is the great holy centre called Śiloccaya where people perform penance and go to heaven. Even the grasses there, in view of their being supported by a number of holy centre attain heaven. Thereafter is the holy centre called Indrāṇī Tīrtha where Indrāṇī performed penance and obtained Indra as her husband. This holy centre must be resorted to like Prayāga. Then there is the holy centre Snātaka that yields merits. It was here that Viśvāmitra performed penance and although he was a Kṣatriya, he derived the status of a Brāhmaṇa sage by resorting to the holy centre.

52b-54. Then the holy centre Pradyumna Tīrtha is famous. By means of his penance here, Kāma became the son of Hari by the name Pradyumna. Thereafter is the holy centre Dakṣaprayāga which is very great and which yields great prosperity. This extends from Gaṅgā to Yamunā (?) By taking the holy dip therein ever-lasting merit is obtained as one gets at Prayāga.

CHAPTER FORTYONE

The Procedure for Charitable Gifts

Vasu said :

1. Henceforth, the benefit of the rites of taking bath etc. is being explained. O daughter of Brahmā and the beloved of the king, listen attentively.

2. Śivā (the auspicious river) redeems from the world a hundred thousand members of the families of those persons by whom the meritorious river Gaṅgā was at least once bathed into, with devotion.

3. O gentle lady, if the Sandhyā prayers are offered there, the merit thereof is a hundred thousand times more than

the benefit when they are performed in ordinary places. The Gaṅgā who sanctifies the Brāhmaṇas is competent to do so.

4. If water-libations are offered to the Pitṛs by the sons endowed with faith, O Mohinī, they give rare and everlasting satisfaction to the manes.

5. The Pitṛs will stay in the heaven for as many thousand years as the number of gingelly seeds taken by their sons in the holy rite of the Pitṛs.

6. If the Pitṛs are propitiated with the auspicious waters of the Gaṅgā, all the Pitṛs staying in the worlds of the Pitṛs (including the ancestors of all other people) attain the greatest satisfaction.

7. O auspicious-faced lady, he who wishes his life to be fruitful and has a desire for progeny, must propitiate the Pitṛs and the Devas after approaching the Gaṅgā.

8. Those who are dead and have gone to miserable condition (in hell), and are propitiated by persons born in their families by means of Kuśa grass, gingelly seeds and the waters of the Gaṅgā, go to Hari's region.

9. It is the statement of god Brahmā that "those Pitṛs who are meritorious and who are stationed in the heaven attain salvation if they are propitiated with the waters of the Gaṅgā."

10. If the Pitṛs are propitiated for a month by means of Tarpaṇa[1] rites, and the offerings of balls of rice (Piṇḍas) in the Gaṅgā, all of them are highly delighted and they attain splendour of the sun.

11-13a. (Defective) They get into excellent aerial chariots and go over to the world of Brahmā, accompanied by the bevies of celestial ladies, bedecked in gold ornaments and jewels, embellished in clusters of pearls and beautified with garlands etc. and having the charming bodies of the Gandharvas. They will have divine pleasures and they will be honoured with

1. *Tarpaṇa* means satiating one by offering water. Manu (2. 176) has prescribed daily *Tarpaṇa* of gods, sages and *Pitṛs* (ancestors). *Tarpaṇa* is both a part of bath as well as of *Brahma-Yajña*. It is to be performed with both the hands according to one's particular *Śākhā* of the Vedas. (for details *vide* HD. II. pp. 689-95.)

the pleasing sounds of flutes, lutes, drums, conchs, Mṛdaṅgas and other instruments.

13b-14a. The man who takes bath in the Gaṅgā every day and worships the Liṅga of god Śiva certainly attains the greatest liberation, even in a single birth.

14b-15a. Agni-Hotras, Vedas and Yajñas with sumptuous monetary gifts are not equal to even a hundred millionth part of the worship of the Liṅga in the Gaṅgā.

15b-16a. If one sprinkles with the waters of the Gaṅgā (directing the act to the Pitṛs or the Devas, in view of his Pitṛs, they will be pleased and satisfied instantaneously even if they are in the hell.

16b-18a. The waters of the copper-pots are ten times better than the waters of the mud-pots for the holy ablution. The merit in silver vessels is hundred times better and that of gold vessels is remembered to be crore times better. Similarly, in the cases of Arghya, Naivedya, and oblations and worships the benefit goes on increasing due to the qualities of the vessels used.

18b-19a. Being affluent, if one does not extend the paraphernalia of worship due to delusion, he does not attain the benefit of those respective rites. He is shouted down as Devadrohī (inimical to God).

19b-20. The sight of the Devas is meritorious; touching them is better than seeing; worshipping is more excellent than touching. Beyond this is the ablution with ghee. Learned men say that ablution with the waters of the Gaṅgā is equal to the ablution with ghee.

21-22b. By offering Arghya even once to the deities alongwith one's own Pitṛs, a man shall attain heavenly pleasures in the company of his sons and grandsons.—the Arghya, however, shall consist of special articles of worship alongwith the Gaṅgā water, in a copper vessel of the capacity of a Prastha according to the reckoning in the Magadha land.

22c-23. The constituents of the Arghya to the sun are eight viz—water, milk, ends of Kuśa grass, ghee, curds, honey, red Karavīra flowers and red sandal paste.

24-25. An excellent man must instal the idols of Viṣṇu, Śiva, sun, Durgā and Brahmā on the banks of the Gaṅgā. According to his ability he must construct shrines too for them. The benefit of constructing these here is crores and crores of times more than that of erecting them in other holy centres.

26-27. According to one's ability one must make Liṅgas having all special characteristics, out of the clay found on the banks of the Gaṅgā. Every day he must instal them, worship them with Mantras, leaves, flowers etc. according to his ability and finally cast them into the Gaṅgā. The benefit of these activities is endless.

28. If an excellent man devoutly performs the Japa of eight-syllabled Mantra i.e. Oṁ Namo Nārāyaṇāya (Om, obeisance unto Nārāyaṇa) in the Gaṅgā that bestows bliss on everyone, liberation is within his reach.

29. All the Siddhis wait upon the person who observes rules and restraints and performs Japa of the Mantra "Oṁ namo Nārāyaṇāya", for six months.

30. He who performs Japa of the Mantra "Namaḥ Śivāya" (Obeisance to Śiva) alongwith the Oṁkāra, in accordance with the injunction, for two million and four hundred thousand times, shall become Śaṅkara himself.

31. There is no doubt that the five-syllabled Mantra—Namaḥ Śivāya—is highly efficacious and is Śiva himself. By performing its Japa whether one is unholy or holy, one becomes free from sins.

32. If the Gaṅgā is worshipped, the deities too are worshipped. Hence, one shall assiduously worship the celestial river.

33-35. One shall meditate on the Gaṅgā as follows :- She has four arms and three eyes. She is splendid in all limbs; she holds the jewelled pot, white lotus and the gestures of granting boons and fearlessness with her four arms. She is clad in white garments; she is bedecked in pearls and jewels; she is pleased; her face is splendid and her lotus-like heart melts with pity; she has flooded the entire surface of the Earth with nectarine juice and is ever bowed to by the three worlds.[1] One who

1. This description is instructive to have a mental picture of the Gaṅgā while meditating as well as making her idol.

meditates on the Gaṅgā thus and worships her shall be meritorious.

36. He who worships her continuously even for half a month shall be equal to a Deva. The benefit will be more if the duration of worship is more.

37. It was on the seventh day in the bright half of the month of Vaiśākha that the Gaṅgā was formerly drunk up by Jahnu out of anger, and cast off later on through the right ear.

38. O splendid-faced lady, one should worship the divine Gaṅgā, the girdle of the firmament, on that day or on the Akṣayatṛtīyā day or in the month of Vaiśākha or Kārttika.

39. After keeping awake at night, the devotee shall worship Viṣṇu, Gaṅgā and Śiva with feelings of great devotion, by means of cooked barley grains and gingelly seeds.

40-42a. Similarly, the following articles too shall be used in worship viz.—fragrant flowers, saffron, Agallochum, sandal paste, the leaves of Tulasī, Bilva etc., the fruits of Mātuluṅga (citron-like fruit,) etc, incense, lights, Naivedya (food) offerings etc. Their quantity and variety must be befitting one's affluence and status. He will be going to the world of Viṣṇu, riding on a divine aerial chariot. He will be honoured there for hundreds, thousands and crores of Kalpas.

42b-43. Thereafter, he will return to the Earth and become a virtuous king. He will be endowed with comely features and good conduct. He will enjoy different kinds of pleasures. On death he will have perfect knowledge and shall attain Absorption in Śiva.

44. Whether it is Yajña, or charitable gift, penance or Japa, Śrāddha or the worship of the gods, everything performed in (i.e. on the bank of) the Gaṅgā yields benefits crores and crores of times.

45. Listen to the merit of that person who makes a charitable gift of a cow of ghee (?) on the day of Akṣaya Tṛtīyā on the banks of the Gaṅgā in accordance with the injunctions.

46-48. For thousands and crores of Kalpas, for hundreds and crores of Kalpas, he will be honoured in the world of Brahmā alongwith his ancestors. He will be going there in an

aerial chariot, variously bedecked in gold and jewels and embellished with figures of swans. He will be as refulgent as a thousand suns. He will be blessed with all cherished desires. Thereafter he is born as a Brāhmaṇa endowed with much wealth on the banks of Gaṅgā. Undoubtedly he will become a knower of the Brahman after death and attain salvation.

49. Similarly, he who makes a charitable gift of a cow duly, is honoured in the heavenly world for as many years as there are hairs on the body of the cow.

50. Afterwards, he is born in a family richly endowed with wealth and foodgrains, full of jewels, gold and plots of lands and possessing good conduct, learning and fame.

51. No doubt need be entertained in this regard that he will enjoy extensive pleasures, that he will be blessed with sons and grandsons and that he will be attaining final emancipation from Saṁsāra.

52. If a Kapilā (tawny-coloured) cow is duly given to a person who has mastered the Vedas, he leads all his ancestors stationed in the hell on to the heaven.

53. He who gives a plot of land on the Gaṅgā, extending to a Nivartana (i.e. about two hundred and ten hands) excels Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva for as many years as there are particles of dust on that plot of land.

54-57. He is reborn on the Earth. He shall become the lord of seven continents. He will be awakened after sleep by means of musical sounds, drums, conchs, etc., songs and instrumental music as well as eulogies of the Māgadhas (bards). He will attain all sorts of pleasures. He will be engrossed in all holy religious acts. He will take all those ancestors detained in the hell, on to the heaven, and will liberate those who are in heaven. O Mohinī, he will derive perfect spiritual knowledge himself. In the end, with the sword of perfect knowledge, he will cut off Avidyā (Ignorance) consisting of five knots. Attaining the greatest detachment, he will realise the greatest Brahman.

58. Each rod is seven hands long. Thirty such rods make a Nivartana. Two thirds of this constitute Gocarma measure. Vidhi (Brahmā) himself has mentioned this measurement.

59. If anyone gives a village on the bank of the Gaṅgā to Brāhmaṇas, it is conducive to the delight of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva, Durgā and the sun-god.

60-62a. The giver of the village attains thousand times the benefit mentioned in the case of all charitable gifts, all Yajñas, all penances, holy rites and merits. He will be joyously eulogised by the Devas and others. He will be sporting about in an aerial chariot as refulgent as crores of suns in the city pertaining to Viṣṇu (Vaikuṇṭha) or to Śaṅkara (Kailāsa). He stays there for as many years as there are dust particles in the plot of land. He is then reborn in the family of Yogins, endowed with Aṇimā (ability to be atomic in size) and other supernormal powers.

62b-66a. O gentle lady, he who gives sixteen Māṣas of gold to a leading Brāhmaṇa on the Akṣaya-Tṛtīyā day is worshipped in all the worlds. Thanks to the charitable gift of cooked food, one attains Viṣṇu's world; thanks to the gift of gingelly seeds, one attains Śiva's world; by giving jewels, one attains Brahmā's world; Indra's world by giving cow and gold; the world of the Gandharvas by giving gold and garments; renown by giving away a virgin in marriage. He shall attain salvation-yielding knowledge through learning, and realise the pure unsullied Being.

66b-72. I shall succinctly mention the merit attained by a person who plants a big park on the banks of the Gaṅgā with the following trees viz. plantain trees, coconut trees, wood apple trees, Aśoka, Campaka jack trees, Bilva trees, Kadamba trees, holy fig trees, Pāṭala trees, mango trees, palmyras, oranges, and other trees. After making an image also therein bedecked in flowers such as Jāti, Vijaya (?) and Pāṭala he shall dedicate it to Śiva or Viṣṇu or Durgā or the sun god. With great devotion he must provide it with all necessary objects. They will stay in those worlds for as many thousands of Kalpas as there are flowers, roots, fruits and seeds of various kinds.

CHAPTER FORTYTWO

The Procedure for the Gift of Guḍa-dhenu[1]

Mohini said :

1. I am blessed. I am contented. My life is successful, since the excellent greatness of the Gaṅgā has been heard from your lotus-like mouth.

2. There is no other sacred river equal to the Gaṅgā on the surface of the Earth. The merit accruing from the sight etc. of that river has been described in this manner.

3. O leading Brāhmaṇa, I have been always your devotee. In due order, mention the procedure of the gift of Guḍadhenu (a cow made of Jaggery) etc.

Vasiṣṭha said :

4. On hearing those words of Mohinī, Vasu, her priest, who knew the principles and real meanings of the Vedas and Āgamas said smilingly.

Vasu said :

5. O Mohinī, listen. I shall recount to you what has been asked by you viz. the procedure for the gift of the cow made of jaggery etc. as glorified and prescribed in the scriptures.

1. Although the chapter is captioned as *Guḍa-dhenu* (*dāna*) *vidhi*, 'The procedure for the gift of the (replica of the) cow made of jaggery', it prescribes some thirteen kinds of articles (some liquids) to be presented as 'cows'. This chapter is called *Guḍa-dhenu-vidhi* as jaggery is the first in the list of such articles representing cows. *vide* VV. 22-25 below. The *Mt. P.* Ch. 81 and AP. 212-10-34 endorse the procedure of the *gift* (*dāna*) of *guḍa-dhenu* which is broadly thus :

A black-antelope-skin four cubits in length is to be spread over-ground smeared with cow-dung and overstrewn with *darbha* grass, with the neck-portion of the skin to the east and a smaller skin symbolic of the calf is also to be spread. The jaggery-cow should be of the weight of 4 or 2 or 1 *Bhāra* and the calf to be proportionately of one quarter of the cow's weight depending on the affluence of the donor. vide VV. 6-20 below for the detailed procedure of gifting the jaggery-cow. As usual the cow is identified with the *Lakṣmī* of all deities. V. 20 states that the above procedure is to be followed in gifting other articles as 'cows'.

6. The ground must be smeared with cow-dung, and Kuśa grass must be assiduously spread over it. Over it a deer skin measuring four Hastas (hands) must be placed with the neck (portion) directed towards the east.

7-9a. The replica of the cow shall be so made that its face is turned towards the East and the calf is near the leg on the northern side (i.e. the left side). In the most excellent Guḍadhenu four Bhāras (special weight of 3000 Palas) of jaggery must be used, and the calf is made with a Bhāra of Jaggery. The middling replica of the cow is to be made with two Bhāras of jaggery. The calf must be made with half a Bhāra of jaggery. The lowest type of Guḍadhenu is made of one Bhāra of Jaggery (1 Bhāra = 200 Palas). The calf shall then be made with a fourth of it. These replicas are made in accordance with the wealth of the household.

9b-10. A person who is affluent enough to make the earlier type of replica but prepares a latter type of replica, is a person of confused mind. He will not have the excellent future benefit. Both the cow and the calf made of jaggery shall be covered with a soft white cloth.

11. Oyster shells are to be used for their ears. Sugarcane stems for the legs, pure pearls for their eyes; white threads for their sinews and veins and white plants for their dewlaps.

12. The knots on their backs shall be represented by a copper pot; the hair by means of white chowries (tail of the antelope called Camara), corals shall be studded to their feet and butter shall represent the udders.

13. There must be a bell metal vessel for the purpose of milking into. The pupils of the eyes shall be represented by a sapphire gem; the two horns must be bedecked in gold; the hoofs must be of pure silver.

14. Many kinds of fruits (must be given along with the cow). A small case of scents shall represent the snout. After making (the cow and the calf) thus, the devotee shall worship them with incense and lights. The following prayer shall be repeated :

15. "May the Lakṣmī of all living beings, may goddess Lakṣmī of the Devas stationed in the form of a cow, give me peace and calmness.

16. May the beloved wife of Śaṅkara stationed in the bodies of the Rudras, may the goddess in the form of a cow dispel my sin.

17. May that Laksmī stationed on the chest of Viṣṇu, may that Lakṣmī in the form of Svāhā (wife of the fire god), may the Śakti of the moon, the sun and Indra and which is in the form of the cow be conducive to prosperity.

18. May that Lakṣmī of the four-faced deity, may that Lakṣmī of Kubera, may that Laksmī of the guardians of the worlds, may this cow be the bestower of boons on me.

19. May that Svadhā of the chiefs of the Pitṛs, may that Svāhā of the partakers of Yajña, may this cow that dispels sins grant peace unto me."

20. After repeating this Mantra the devotee should dedicate the cow to the Brāhmaṇa. This is the procedure cited in the case of all articles to be given as cows.

21. O Mohinī, listen. I shall describe the nature as laid down in the scriptures, of all those ten kinds of cow glorified as destroyers of sins.

22-24a. The first is the cow made of jaggery, the next one is the cow of ghee; the third is the cow of gingelly seeds; the fourth is that named after the water ; the fifth shall be the cow of milk; the sixth is made of honey; the seventh the cow of sugar ; the eighth shall be the cow of curds; the ninth is the cow of jewels, and the tenth is the one in its own form (the real form).[1]

24b-25. For the cows in the form of liquids, pots shall be used and for others the masses and heaps of the articles concerned. Some wise men desire to include gold (cows) also among these. Some great sages recommend cows of fresh butter as well as of oil.

26. This alone is the procedure. These alone are the articles facilitating the completion of the holy rite along with

1. These verses list the names of the articles to be gifted as 'cows'. The list is common to Mt. P. 81. 18-19 and AP. 212.11-12. But the NP adds 'gold', fresh butter and oil as additional articles for cow (v. 25) out of which 'gold' and 'butter' are recommended in the Mt. P. 81. 21 which include *Ratna-dhenu* (jewelled cow) as well.

the Mantras and invocations in the different Parvans for ever.

27. They must be given as gifts in accordane with one's faith. They yield worldly pleasures and liberation. They accord the same benefit as mantras. They are auspicious, removers of all sins.

28-29. The cow of jaggery etc. must be given by persons endowed with devotion and faith during tropical and equinotical transits of the sun, on the holy occasions of Vyatīpāta, during the anniversaries of the beginnings of the Yugas and Manvantaras, and during the special occasions like eclipses etc.[1] They may be given in holy centres, in one's own house, or particularly on the banks of the Gaṅgā.

30-31. After making this gift of a cow to a leading Brāhmaṇa in accordance with the injunctions, the devotee shall circumambulate the Brāhmaṇa and please the Ṛtviks with monetary gifts. He shall make obeisance to them and bid them farewel. Thereafter, with great concentration and purity of mind, he should worship the Gaṅgā duly.

32-36. He must visit the goddess of divine forms assuming the eight physical bodies, with a Prastha-measure of Śālī rice grains and two Prasthas of milk. The devotee should make the milk pudding. He must add honey and ghee a pala of each with devotional feelings. He should then cast off that milk pudding into the Gaṅgā along with sweet-meats and ring-like pies, half a Guñjā weight of gold and silver, sandal paste, agollochum, camphor, saffron, aromatic resin, Bilva leaves, Dūrvā grass, Rocanā (yellow pigment), white sandal, blue lotuses and other fragrant flowers according to his ability. He must be fully devout then.

37-38. O blessed lady, he must respect this Mantra mentioned in the Purāṇa viz- "Obeisance, obeisance to the Gaṅgā. to Nārāyaṇa and to Śiva." O Mohinī, this alone is the procedure. Every month, on the New moon day, and on the full moon day,

1. The days for giving a jaggery-cow are the same as in the case of other *dānas*

Ayane viṣuve caiva ṣaḍaśīti-mukheṣu ca /
Candra-Sūryoparāge ca dattam akṣayam ucyate //.

Mbh. Vana. 200.125

this must be observed in the morning by persons, with great concentration.

39-41. With great devotion and mental joy, the man must worship thus in accordance with his ability, for the period of a year. He must take only a small quantity of food and that too only Haviṣya) (cooked rice offerings soaked in ghee). He must observe the vow of celibacy by day and by night. O Mohinī, by observing this strictly at the end of a year, the Gaṅgā, assuming divine form, wearing heavenly garlands and bedecked in divine jewels shall reveal herself to him personally. She will stand personally in front of him and grant him boons.

42. O splendid lady ! After visualizing with his own eyes, the actual manifestation of the divine form of the Gaṅgā before him, the man shall become quite contented and blessed.

43. Whatever desires he cherishes, he accomplishes them all. If he be devoid of any desire, he will attain the final beatitude in this very existence.

44. Thus the procedure of the worship of the Gaṅgā alongwith that of the gift of cow made of jaggery, about which you asked me, has been recounted by me completely. It is a holy rite that brings about salvation. This observance lasts for a year, and it yields satisfaction to the lord of Śrī (Viṣṇu).

CHAPTER FORTYTHREE

The Procedure af Worship of the Gaṅgā

Vasiṣṭha said :

1. O leading king, on hearing the words of Vasu indicating the greatness of the Gaṅgā, Mohinī once again asked her Brāhmaṇa priest.

Mohinī said :

2. O Brāhmaṇa, everything auspicious, like the gift of a cow etc. has been heard by me. Now I wish to hear the

excellent Gaṅgāvrata (holy observance pertaining to the Gaṅgā).

3. O Brāhmaṇa, O omniscient one, tell me what is the benefit of the worship of the Gaṅgā, etc. or its installation there ? I seek refuge in you.

4. You alone are the bestower of salvation to me who am abandoned by my kinsmen. O Prominent one among the knowers or the learned, I am bereaved of my husband, nor have I any son.

5. I have sought refuge in you giving full credence and weight to the words of my father. Hence, holy sir, kindly narrate to me the way of propitiation of the deity along with the glorification of the Gaṅgā on hearing which exery one is absolved of his sins. I have bowed down to you.

Vasiṣṭha said :

6. O king, on hearing the words of Mohinī, Vasu, the dignified Brāhmaṇa, the foremost among the knowers of the Vedas, honoured Mohinī and said :

Vasu said :

7-8a. "O gentle, lady, you have asked me pertinently, with the desire for the benefit of all the worlds. (I shall tell you) the greatness of the Gaṅgā completely. It is destructive of great sins.

8b-9a. Formerly, while residing on the bank of the Gaṅgā this was narrated out of mercy by the bull-bannered god Śiva when he was lovingly asked by his consort goddess Pārvatī.

9b-10. Food offering is taken in the forenoon by the Devas and at midday by the sages; in the afternoon by the Pitṛs and at night by the Guhyakas and others. It is excellent to take food at night after going beyond all other periods of times.

11. Begging alms is more excellent than observing fast. Taking unsolicited food is better than begging for alms. Taking food at night* is better than taking unsolicited food. Hence, one shall take food at night (when stars appear in the sky).

**Nakta* is mainly the time when the stars appear in the sky—Hemādri on *Kāla*, p. 114.

12. The devotee regularly practising Nakta (acceptance of food after appearance of stars in the evening) shall observe six things viz. partaking of Haviṣya, ablution, truthfulness, lightness of deity, holy rites in the fire, and sleeping below* (on the bare ground).

13-14. The man who regularly practises this observance of Nakta shall do so in the month of Māgha on the bank of the Gaṅgā. If he takes it near a Śiva temple he shall take Kṛśara with ghee. He shall offer Kṛśarānna as Naivedya (food offering) to Śiva. Observing Kāṣṭamauna (the silence of a log of wood), he shall take food and avoid over-indulgence of the tongue.

15. He shall take food in the leafy cups of Palāśa tree. Conquering the sense-organs, he shall remember Śiva. He shall offer separate balls of rice to Dharmarāja and the goddess (Pārvatī).

16-17. On the Caturdaśī (fourteenth) day in both the fortnights, he should observe fast. On the full moon day the ablution of Śiva must be performed severally with scents, Gaṅgā water, milk, honey, ghee and curds. So also he must offer a golden flower on the head of the Liṅga.

18. Then he should offer to the extent of his capacity, baked pies cooked in ghee. Taking an Āḍhaka measure of gingelly seeds, he should put it upon the Śivaliṅga.

19. The devotee should worship the lord of all by means of blue lotuses and lilies. If they are not available, he should worship Hara with golden lotuses.

20-21. With devotion, one should offer to Maheśa, milk pudding soaked in honey, agallochum accompanied by ghee, lamp wherein ghee is burned and smear with sandal-paste, etc. He should offer leaves and fruits and dedicate a pair of black cows of handsome appearance.

22. At the end of a month he should feed eight Brāhmaṇas and give them monetary gifts. For the whole of that month, he should avoid honey (wine) and flesh. He shall observe celibacy for the whole of that month.

*Cf. *Liṅga* P. I.10-12. Hemādri on *Vrata* I. p. 333. *Smṛti-kaustubha*, p. 11 quotes Gd. P.

23-24a If a person performs this holy rite even for once in the manner mentioned before, with faith and devotion, maintaining all observances and restraints, attains all the pleasures here and after death, he attains excellent salvation.

24b-27. He goes to the beautiful city of Śiva accompanied by the members of his family, in aerial chariots resembling sapphire gems, full of divine jewels. Peacocks shall be yoked to them. Means of all divine pleasures will be present there. He shall be accompanied by different friends. Until the dissolution of all living beings, he will enjoy different kinds of desired pleasures. Thereafter, he becomes the righteous-souled ruler of Jambūdvīpa. Free from all sins, he will enjoy all sorts of pleasures.

28. Endowed with comely form and good fortune, exercising royal powers and free from all ailments, he too will enjoy this fruit.

29. Or on the fourteenth day, in the bright half of Vaiṣākha, he who with a concentrated mind observes the Nakta-Vrata should take at night food consisting of cooked Śāli rice mixed with milk.

30-31. The devotee should worship Śiva with flowers etc. and offer edibles as Naivedya. He should partake of the food with the silence of a log of wood. He should perform the rite of brushing the teeth silently with the twig of a banyan tree with purity of mind. He should sleep near the Śivaliṅga at night, on the banks of the river Gaṅgā.

32. On the morning of the full-moon day (of Vaiśākha) he should duly take bath in the Gaṅgā. He should perform the Saṁkalpa rite (formal declaration of the intention) for fast. On that night, he should keep awake.

33-34. He should perform ablution of the Liṅga duly with ghee and worship it with flowers, scents, incense, lamps and food offerings. He should embellish a splendid bull with white flowers, cloths, etc. as well as powdered turmeric and sandal paste. He should duly dedicate it to Śiva.

35-36. He should feed Brāhmaṇas with milk pudding in accordance with his capacity. He who performs thus with devotion and faith, even for once, undoubtedly obtains that merit

which one gets after performing penance with due observances for one thousand seven hundred and fifty divine Yugas.

37-38a. He goes to Īśvara's (god Śiva's) palace alongwith his ancestors by means of aerial chariots that have the luster of swans and Kunda flowers that resemble the moonchariots that are yoked with white bulls and embellished with clusters of pearls.

38b-39a. He enjoys different kinds of pleasures through beloved ladies of divine beauty, having the fragrance of blue lotuses. He will be surrounded by them.

39b-40. He will be blessed with prosperity and power for an indefinite period of time. He is born on the Earth as a king endowed with fame and prosperity. Under his single royal umbrella, he holds sway over the Earth.

41-42a. In the end, he gains detached outlook on life and regains the Gaṅgā. With that faith he courts death in the Gaṅgā. He remembers the previous birth and certainly attains salvation.

42b-44. A man or a woman should observe the following holy rite with devotional feelings. On the tenth day in the bright half of the month of Jyeṣṭha when associated with the constellation Hasta, the devotee should keep vigil at night on the banks of the river Gaṅgā; with great faith he should worship the Gaṅgā with ten kinds of flowers and scents, ten varieties of fruits, ten different articles of Naivedyas and ten lights. He shall offer batel leaves too.

45-46a. After taking bath in the Gaṅgā with devotion the devotee should, with due formality, offer ten handfuls of black gingelly seeds with ghee into the water. He should also offer balls of ground flour of fried grains as well as those of Jaggery each being ten in number.

46b-49a. On the beautiful banks of the Gaṅgā, a mystic diagram of the lotus and Svastika should be drawn, over which a full water-pot should be placed. It must be covered with a cloth. Round the neck of the pot, a garland must be tied. An idol of the Gaṅgā, in the form mentioned below, shall be made in gold or silver and placed over the pot. The devotee should worship the goddess (i.e. the divine Gaṅgā) thus. If gold or

silver is not available, the image shall be made of clay. If the devotee is not able to make the clay idol, he shall draw the figure on the ground by means of flour dough.

49b-51. The form of the Gaṅgā for the idol as well as the picture is as follows : She has four arms. The eyes are beautiful. She has the lustre of ten thousand moons. She is being fanned with chowries. A white umbrella above her head embellishes her. She is delighted. Her innermost heart melts with pity. She is ready to grant boons. With nectarine juice, she has flooded the surface of the Earth. She is eulogised by the Devas and others. She is adorned with divine jewels. She has divine garlands and unguents.[1]

52. After meditating on the goddess in the water in the manner mentioned before, the devotee should worship her in the objects used for worship (i.e. image or picture). He should observe a special worshipping rite with the following Mantra. (vide verse 66 below).

53. During the worship, the ablution of the deity with Pañcāmṛta is specially recommended. Just in front of the image, the ground shall be scrubbed and smeared with cow-dung.

54-55. In accordance with his capacity the devotee should worship Nārāyaṇa, Maheśa, Brahmā, Bhāskara the sun, Bhagīratha the king, and the king of mountains, Himavān, by means of scents, fragrant flowers etc. To ten Brāhmaṇas he shall distribute ten Prastha measures of gingelly seeds.

56-57. Similarly, he should distribute ten Prastha measures of barley-grains to ten persons after mixing them with milk products. In accordance with his capacity, the devotee should cause the replicas of aquatic animals such as fish, tortoise, frog, (crocodiles), etc. made in gold or silver. If it is not available, he should make them out of flour dough. After worshipping these with flowers etc., the knower of the Mantras shall cast them into the Gaṅgā reciting the Mantra (in verse 66 below) in the meanwhile.

58. On the day of Rathayātrā (chariot procession), the devotee should make a replica of the Gaṅgā facing the north

1. Cf. *Supra* 41. 33-35.

and riding a chariot, if he has the required affluence and means there.

59. Rare indeed is the vision of the Gaṅgā going round in procession in the case of men of evil deeds. Just as there is the chariot procession of Durgā; this procession too should be conducted in the same manner.

60. After observing all the rites thus, in accordance with the injunction, the devotee should avoid stinginess in the matter of expense. Thereby he is immediately liberated from the ten kinds of sins mentioned below.

61-63.* Among them there are three types of physical sins viz. a) as taking away what is not voluntarily given, b) killing, etc. without scriptural sanction and c) enjoying another man's wife carnally. There are four types of verbal sins viz. (i) harsh words (ii) false-hood (iii) back-biting in all its modes and (iv) irrelevant speech. There are three kinds of mental sins viz. a) wistful contemplation of another man's wealth, b) thinking ill of others mentally and c) futile ardour and yearning.

64. The devotee will be liberated from ten types of sins accumulated in the course of crores of births. There is no doubt about itsofar as the utterance of Brahmā goes.

65. (The Gaṅgā) worshipped with the following Mantra does redeem from worldly existence, forty earlier generations and forty subsequent generations.

66-67. The Mantra is "Om namo daśa-harāyai Nārāyaṇyai Gaṅgāyai namaḥ" —"Oṁ obeisance to Daśaharā (remover of tenfold ills), to Nārāyaṇī, to Gaṅgā." He who repeats this Mantra five thousand times within a day and a night, on the day of the chariot procession, shall attain the fruit of ten kinds of Dharmas (?). He shall redeem from the ocean of worldly existence ten earlier generations and ten subsequent generations.

68. The following hymn should be taken up for repetition on that day. The devotee should, thereafter, proceed ahead with the worship of Viṣṇu.

*Quoted from Manu XII 5-7.

Hymn to Gaṅgā[1]

69. Om obeisance to Śivā, the Gaṅgā, the bestower of auspicious things. Obeisance be to you. Hail be to the deity of the form of Viṣṇu. Obeisance, Obeisance be to you the Gaṅgā.

70. Bow to the deity, the embodiment of all Devas; obeisance to the deity of the form of medicine; Hail to you, O most excellent physician of all ailments of everyone.

71. Obeisance be to you; O queller of poisons originating from mobile and immobile beings; obeisance, obeisance to the destroyer of the poison of worldly existence; obeisance to the enlivener.

72. Repeated bows to the remover of the three types of miseries of human beings, to the Īśvarī (controller) of vital breaths. Obeisance to you, the remover of distress, the bestower of calmness and peace; obeisance to you the omniformed one.

73. Hail to the purifier of all for liberation from sins; obeisance to the deity bestowing worldly pleasures and salvation. obeisance, obeisance to the deity possessing pleasures.

74. Bow to you, the Mandākinī (i.e. heavenly Gaṅgā); obeisance, obeisance to the bestower of heavenly pleasures; obeisance to the embodied form of the set of the three worlds; obeisance, obeisance to the divine one.

75. Hail to you stationed in Śukla (i.e. Śiva); obeisance, obeisance to the possessor of well-being; Bow to you the divinity stationed in the seats of the Devas. Hail to you the possessor of brilliance.

76. Salutations to the slow-moving river, to the bearer of the Liṅga, to Nārāyaṇī. Obeisance to you who are friendly to the universe. Obeisance to you, O Revatī.

77. Obeisance always to you of huge size. Salutations to the support of all the worlds. Obeisance to you the chief one in the universe. Repeated bow to you Nandinī (the delighter).

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1. Here Gaṅgā is identified with the supreme Deity. Hence, many epithets of the river Gāṅgā remind one of Vedāntic Hymns.

78. Obeisance to the large one, the auspicious one and to the immoral one; salutations to the Pure one, devoid of dust (sin); obeisance to the deity whose access is both far and near. Obeisance, obeisance to the redeeming divinity.

79. Obeisance to you who abide in the heaven; salutations to the non-different, to the unsplit divinity. Obeisance to the quiescent one; bow to you the stable foundation; obeisance, obeisance to you the bestower of these boons.

80. Obeisance to the fierce one. Obeisance to one who prattles with her mouth (?); salutations to the enlivener; obeisance to one who goes to the Brahman; obeisance to one who bestows the Brahman; obeisance, obeisance to the destroyer of sins.

81. Bow to the queller of the anguish of those who bow down; salutations to the mother of the universe; obeisance to Viluṣā (one who injures (the wicked); obeisance to the remover of difficulties; repeated obeisance to the efficient one.

82-83. Obeisance to one who is antagonistic to all miseries; repeated obeisance to the auspicious deity. O greatest deity, greater than the greatest, obeisance to you, O bestower of salvation for ever. May Gaṅgā be in front of me; may Gaṅgā be at my sides. May Gaṅgā be all round me; O Gaṅgā, may my existence be in you. You are at the beginning. You are in the end; you are in the middle, you are everything. O auspicious deity who have descended on the Earth.

84. You alone are the primordial Prakṛti; you are lord Nārāyaṇa. O Gaṅgā, you are the great Ātman; you are Śiva. Obeisance, obeisance to you."

85-87. He who recites this hymn every day with devotion or listens to this with faith, is liberated from the tenfold defects, physical and verbal. The patient will be liberated from the ailment and the unlucky from miseries and mishaps. He is liberated from the enemies, from the bondage and fears. He attains all desires. After death he gets absorbed into the Brahman.

88. There is no fear from arson, larceny or sinful activities in the house where this hymn is written down and is honoured.

89-90. A person who stands in the waters of the Gaṅgā and repeats this hymn ten times on the Daśamī (tenth) day whether he is indigent or incompetent, shall after worshipping the Gaṅgā with devotion, attain the benefit that is mentioned in case of the worship performed in accordance with the procedure laid down above.

91. Just as Gaurī, so also is the Gaṅgā. Hence the procedure laid down for the worship of Gaurī should be followed in the case of the worship of the Gaṅgā too.

92. Just as Śiva so also is Viṣṇu; Just as Viṣṇu so also Umā; just as Umā so also is the Gaṅgā. There is no difference and distinction among them.

93. He who advocates that there is difference between Viṣṇu and Rudra, that there is difference between Gaṅgā and Gaurī, and that there is difference between Lakṣmī and Gaurī, is a man of confounded intellect.[1]

94. It is the blessed men on the Earth who cast off their body by the day-time in the bright half of a month in the Gaṅgā during the Uttarāyaṇa (during the transit of the sun in the northern hemisphere), while Janārdana is abiding in the heart meditate upon him as such.

95. O daughter of Brahmā, those men who leave off their vital breaths by casting their bodies into the Gaṅgā go to the world of Viṣṇu eulogised by those who are domiciled in the heaven.

96. (?) He who dies partially due to observance of fast and partially due to being drowned in the Gaṅgā, is not reborn. He attains Sāyujya (identity) with the Brahman.

97. The embodied being that casts off its vital breaths (dies by throwing himself) in the Gaṅgā has the same salvation as that of an intelligent being endowed with Sattva guṇa and Yogic practice.

1. The NP, though a Vaiṣṇava Purāṇa, always advocates the oneness between Śiva and Viṣṇu and other deities. He emphasizes *ekaṁ sat* (Reality is one).

98. The man who takes up the vow of abstaining from taking food and dies on the banks of the Gaṅgā, attains in fact the greatest world alongwith the Pitṛs (his ancestors).

99-101a. (?) If an intelligent man desires to abaṇdon his vital breath by dying in the Gaṅgā but many births pass by and he meets his deaths here and there and at different places but not in the Gaṅgā, or many days elapse as he goes here and there and does not reach it (it does not matter. He will have the benefit). Even if he dies two Yojanas away, it is as beneficial as dying nearby or in the Gaṅgā itself. No doubt need be entertained in this respect.

101b-102a. Whether with the perfect knowledge or without it, whether with desire or without desire, the man who dies in the Gaṅgā attains heavenly pleasures and salvation.

102b-103. Whilst dying, if a man remembers the Gaṅgā or touches it, he attains the greatest salvation even if he is a habitual sinner.

104. Those intelligent men (self-possessed ones) by whom the physical body is cast off after going off to the Gaṅgā attain equality with the Devas. Hence, one shall reasoningly eschew all other means of bestowing liberation and resort to the Gaṅgā till one's body falls.

105. He who dies in the firmament on the Earth or in the water, attains the everlasting region worthy of being honoured by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva.

106. He who is righteous, is alive, who is pure and honoured by good men and who mentally thinks of the Gaṅgā, attains the greatest salvation.

107. Wherever one may die, if one devoutly remembers the Gaṅgā when death is imminent, one goes to the city pertaining to Śiva or to Viṣṇu.

108. The Gaṅgā came out of the cluster of the matted hair of Śambhu, that is very rough and hard. It flowed over the sons of Sagara who were sinners and led them to the heaven.

109. A man is honoured in the heavenly world as many

thousands of years as the number of his bones that are cast in the Gaṅgā.[1]

110. A man's stay in the heavenly world begins from the moment when his bones are cast off into the waters of the Gaṅgā by other men.

111. If the bones of any one of auspicious rites are taken to the Gaṅgā water, he does not at all return from the world of Brahmā.

112. If any one's bones are cast off into the Gaṅgā water within the ten days (from his death), he attains a benefit similar to that of the death within the Gaṅgā.

113-115. The son (or others who perform the obsequies) should take bath and sprinkle Pañcagavya on the bones. He should then place them in a basket or casket alongwith the gold, honey, ghee and gingelly seeds. Facing the quarter frequented by the groups of ghosts (i.e. the south) he shall repeat this—"Obeisance be to Dharma". Thereafter he, should enter the water and saying "He was dear to me," cast off the bones. He should take bath once again and visit the Akṣayavaṭa (the everlasting holy banyan tree). Then he should give away the religious monetary gifts. When this is done the dead man detained in the city of the dead, shall go to the heaven and have a position similar to Indra (the king of gods).[2]

116. Nārāyaṇa is the lord of the place by the current of water on the one hand and a place of four Hastas away on the other hand. No one else can ever be the lord of that place.

117-118. No one shall accept Pratigraha (monetary gift) in that region (where Nārāyaṇa is the lord) even if the vital breaths have reached the throat i.e. even when death is imminent.). The water level reached on the fourteenth day in the bright half of the month of Bhādrapada is called Garbha.

1. The same as *Matsya* 106.52, *Kūrma* I. 37.32; NP *Supra* I. 15.163.

2. This is the procedure of costing-off bones of the deceased relative in the Gaṅgā. Cf. the procedure described in the *Brahma P.* and quoted in *Tīrtha-Cintāmaṇi*, pp. 265-266.

The distance covered by Garbha is called Tīra (bank, shore). "The distance of hundred and fifty Hastas is called Garbha (or the bed of the river). Beyond that is the Tīra."[1]

119-121. O gentle lady, this is the opinion of some and it is approved of in the Śrutis and Smṛtis. The distance of a Gavyūti (six kms) around the Tīra is called Kṣetra (sacred area or field). One should eschew the Tīra and reside in the Kṣetra. Residence in the Tīra is not advisable. The limiting boundary of the Kṣetra extends to one Yojana from either bank. All the sins never transgress the boundary of the Gaṅgā. On seeing it, the sins run away like the forest-dwellers (or the animals) on seeing the lion.

122. O excessively blessed lady, the space of three Yojanas on either side of the Gaṅgā should be known as Siddha-kṣetra. It was here that Rāma and Śambhu had their penance groves.

123. No man shall accept Pratigraha (monetary gift) in a holy centre or in the sacred temples. A man shall abstain from it under all circumstances (i.e. even when there are justifiable reasons).

124. The holy centre is of no avail (i.e. ceases to be so) to one who accepts Pratigraha in the holy centre or in sacred temples as long as that money is retained by him.

125. O gentle lady, by selling the Gaṅgā, one becomes (guilty) of selling (god) Viṣṇu. When Janārdana is sold, all the three worlds are sold.

126. He who applies the clay taken up from the banks of the Gaṅgā on his head assumes the form of the sun for the destruction of darkness.

127. A man shall spread the dust particles taken from the banks of the Gaṅgā and place the balls of rice for his Pitṛs. He shall thus propitiate them and lead them to heaven.

128. O gentle lady, thus the excellent greatness of the Gaṅgā has been recounted to you. A man who reads this or listens to this attains the greatest region of Viṣṇu.

1. *Quoted by Tīrtha-Cintāmaṇi, p.* 266.

129. O daughter of Brahmā, this section is to be repeated every day with devotion by persons who are pure, endowed with faith and who wish for salvation leading to the region of Viṣṇu or Śiva.

CHAPTER FORTYFOUR

*The Greatness of Gayā.**

Vasiṣṭha said :

1. O king, after hearing the excellent greatness of the Gaṅgā, the destroyer of sins, Mohinī said again to the priest.

Mohinī said :

2. O holy sir, I have been blessed with your sympathy since the holy story of the Gaṅgā that dispels sins has been recounted.

3. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, how is the holy place Gayā Tīrtha[1] well-known in the world ? I wish to know it. Kindly recount it now.

Vasu said :

4. The holy centre named Gayā is remembered as the most excellent of all Tīrthas. God Brahmā, the grandsire

*Gayā as a sacred place has been glorified since the Mbh. times. We find *Gayā Māhātmya* in the *Mbh. Vana* chs. 84-95, *Vāyu P.* chs. 105-112, *Garuḍa* chs. 82-86, *Agni* chs. 114-116, *Matsya P.* chs. 102-111. *Padma* I. 38. A no. of verses are common to these, esp in the Vāyu and the NP.

1. One wonders why after glorification of the Gaṅgā, Gayā which is away from the Gaṅgā is given precedence to Prayāga, the King of Tīrthas (*Tirtha-rāja*) and Kāśi, the sacred-most city when both of these holy places are on the Gaṅgā itself. Possibly the author of the NP being a resident of Bengal followed a separate order of sacred places.

of the world, the lord of the chief of the Devas, personally stays here.

5-6. It is here that the following verse was sung by the Pitṛs who desired Yoga : "One shall seek many sons so that at least one of them may go to Gayā or perform a horsesacrifice or set a dark-coloured bull free."[1] O gental lady, the excellent greatness of Gayā is the essence of all essences. I shall recount it succinctly. Listen to it. It yields worldly pleasures as well as liberation from Saṁsāra.

7-8. Formerly, there was an exceedingly powerful demon named Gayāsura. He performed a very terrible penance that scorched all living beings. The Devas being extremely afflicted by the severity of the heat of his penance went to Hari for bringing about his death.

9-11. The Devas sought refuge in Hari. Hari spoke to them :- "When his huge body is struck down, all of you should be auspicious-souled (pure in mind)"* The Devas said "So be it" Once (demon Gaya brought lotuses from the milk ocean for the sake of Śiva's worship. He went to bed in a place near Hari. Since he was deluded by Viṣṇu's Māyā, he was killed by Viṣṇu with his iron club.[2] Thereafter Viṣṇu is remembered when offering balls of rice, taking holy dip etc. (here). He shall go to

1. The same as *Mbh. Vana.* 87. 9-10. Mt. P. 22-6. *Vāyu* 105. 10, *Kūrma* P. II. 35. 12, Pd. P. I. 38.17.

*It may also be interpreted in view of the future events : When his huge body is felled down, you should be there (on it) with your auspicious souls.

2. The story differs in the *Vāyu* P. Ch. 106. There Gayāsura voluntarily offers his body for the sacrifice of god Brahmā and subsequently all gods stay permanently on him.

It is not known why this great self-sacrificer is called an 'Asura.' Apart from the reference to Gaya, the seer of two sūktas in the Ṛgveda (X. 63 and 64), we find a pious king Gaya. the son of King Samudravijaya of Rājagrha in the Śvetāmbara Jaina work Uttarādhyayana-Sūtra and a royal sage Gaya whose hermitage the Buddha is said to have visited (in Aśva ghoṣa's *Buddha-Carita*). Even the *Vāyu* P. which calls it Asura states that his body was purer than gods' and his act of offering his body is too sublime to designate him as Asura.

Thus Jain, Buddhist and Brahmanical sources are unanimous about the saintly nature of the so-called 'Asura' Gaya.

the 'Gadādhara' (wielder of the iron club). At Gayā he is the bestower of salvation.

12. Assuming the form of the Liṅga pure (?) Pitāmaha (god Brahmā) stationed himself on his body. It will be a holy centre with the vehicle of Viṣṇu as the delimiting boundary and guardian deity.

13. The man who performs Yajña, Śrāddha, Piṇḍa-dāna will go to heaven or the world of Brahmā. That man will not go to hell.

14. Realising that the holy centre of Gayā is the greatest of all, Brahmā performed Yogic rites. He worshipped the Brāhmaṇas and the sages who came there.

15. After creating the river Sarasvatī, he stood pervading the quarters and the interstices of the quarters. Then he created edibles, foodstuffs, fruits, etc. and then Kāmadhenus (wish-yielding divine cows.).

16-18. He made Gayatīrtha five Krośas (15kms) in extent. He gave Brāhmaṇas sufficient wealth. In the Yoga (sacrifice) performed by Dharma, these Brāhmaṇas accepted wealth etc. as Pratigraha. Hence those Brāhmaṇas who stayed at Gayā were cursed by Brahmā. "May you not have any learning for three generations. To you the river shall be devoid of taste the mountain shall be a mere rock. Brahmā was then requested by them. Hence the lord created holy centres and sacred rivers.[1]

19. "The people in Gayā are holy ones, by means of Śrāddha they go to the world of Brahmā. I am always worshipped by those persons who honour you.

20. "Liberation is of four types : (That attained through) the perfect knowledge of Brahman, (b) Śrāddha rite at Gayā (c) death in a cowpen (d) residence of men in Kurukṣetra."[2]

21. O gentle lady, there is no doubt that all the oceans, rivers, tanks, wells and eddies go to the holy centre of Gayā tīrtha desirous of holy dips therein.

1. For the story of Brāhmaṇas of Gayā being cursed by God Brahmā for their greediness *vide Vāyu* 106. 73-83 and *AP.* 114. 33-39.

2. V. repeated in *Vāyu* 105. 16, *Vāmana* 33. 1 *AP.* 105. 5b and 6a.

22. The sins of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter, imbibing liquor, stealing, outraging the modesty of the preceptor's wife and those of coming into contact with these perish, thanks to Gayāśrāddha.*

23. Those who are dead but not consecrated (with Vedic Mantras) well, those who are killed by animals and those who are bitten by serpents become liberated by Gayāśrāddha and go to the heaven.

24. The benefit that a man attains by offering balls of rice in Gayā cannot be adequately described by me even in the course of hundreds and crores of Kalpas.

25. O Gentle lady, in this connection there is a traditional mythological story. O blessed lady, listen to it with concentration of mind.

26-27a. In the Tretā yuga there was a king named Viśāla.[1] He lived in the city of Viśālā. He was blessed with fortitude but was devoid of a son. Hence the ruler of Viśālā himself asked the leading Brāhmaṇas. The destroyer of enemies asked them about the son. The Brāhmaṇas of excellent spiritual power and virtue spoke to him.

27b-28a. "O king, go to Gayā. Propitiate Pitṛs with balls of rice in accordance with the injunctions, for the sake of a son. O heroic one, thereby you will certainly have a son who will be the donor of thousands and who will be lord of the entire Earth."

28b-30a. On being thus spoken by the groups of Brāhmaṇas the king, the ruler of Viśālā was delighted. His mind hovered round the most excellent of all holy centres. Accompanied by the Brāhmaṇas he went to Gayā. Desirous of a son he came to the most excellent of all the holy centres. At Gayāśīras he was engrossed in the sacrifice.

30b-31a. In accordance with the injunctions he made offerings of balls of rice to the Pitṛs. At that time he saw three persons in the sky. They were endowed with excellent, physical forms of white, red and black complexions. He spoke to them, "O sirs, why are you thus ? How is it, that delusion is experi-

* Vāyu P. 112-7-14; Agni P. 115.54-59, Garuḍa P. 84.34-39.

1. The same as Vāyu 105. 13.

enced by you ? Tell me everything. Curiosity has been generated in my mind.

Sita (the white person) said :

31b-32. "O king, I am Sita (the white one), your father. My name, colour and activity expatiate upon my name Sita. (I am of pure conduct. Hence my name is 'white'). This red-complexioned one is my father. He has committed ruthless acts. He has killed Brāhmaṇas. He is a sinner. Thereafter (the person beyond that) is my grandfather. By name, colour and activity he is Kṛṣṇa (black).

33. Formerly, in the previous birth, many ancient sages had been killed by this Kṛṣṇa. These two the father and the son are remembered to have fallen into the hell called Avīci.

34. My father and beyond him, the other one both of them are black-faced. They were in the hell for a long time. By means of my pure karman, I attained the seat of Indra which is very difficult of access.

35. You are the knower of Mantras. By offering balls of rice at Gayā, these two who had gone inside the hell called Avīci were liberated, thanks to the power of excellent holy centre.

36-37. O destroyer of your enemies, you had offered water libations saying "I shall propitiate my father, grandfather and great grandfather." O excellent one, thanks to that statement, we all have come together at the same place and time. There is no doubt about this that we will go to the world of Pitṛs, thanks to the power of holy centre.

38. By your offering the balls of rice there at Gayā your grandfather and great-grandfather had been redeemed from their sins. Their subtle bodies too are deformed but they have now attained Siddhi.

39. O son, it is for this reason that I have taken them with me in order to see you. Now I shall go away.

40. As a result of the power of holy centre, a son may, by offerings the balls of rice at Gayā uplift his father who is a Brāhmaṇa-slayer."

41. After saying this and blessing his son viśāla ith benedictions, his father Sita, immediately went to his own world alongwith those two grandfathers.

42. Going once to Gayā, offering balls of rice once, even this is very difficult of access. What then a continuous stay therein ?

43. (?) The holy rite of fallen men is sometimes observed only once in a year in the Gayā-well by the relatives with the consideration for time and space.

44-47. A certain royal ghost* said to a merchant for the purpose of his own liberation ; You visit the holy place called Gayātīrtha. Take your holy bath and be scrupulously clean. Offer balls of rice in my name. By your offering the balls of rice there, I will be easily liberated from this state of ghosthood. I will then attain the auspicious world of all donors." After saying this to the merchant in the company of his attendants, the royal ghost duly but secretly narrated his name etc. After understanding these, the merchant went to the excellent holy centre of Gayāśīrṣa.

48. He performed the rite of Pāṁsunirvāpana (offering of balls of rice on the dust) to the ghosts in due order. He made the gift of wealth after making Pitṛs go ahead.

49. This highly, intelligent person offered balls of rice for himself in accordance with the injunctions but without gingelly seeds.[1] So also in the case of other members born in the family.

50. When the balls of rice were offered by the merchant, (the royal ghost and others) were liberated from ghosthood. They attained the status of twice-borns and went over to the world of Brahmā.

51. The following things should be offered by the sons: milk puddings and the meat of rhinoceros when offered take Pitṛs to their abode. The black and red ewe or ram shall be conducive to the infinite results.

*This story is repeated in *Vāyu P* 112.16-19 *Agni P.* 115.60-64 *Garuda P.* 84.32-35.

1. For offering *Piṇḍa* to oneself *vide Vāyu* 105. 12, AP. 115. 68.

52. Śrāddha, Japa, Homa and austerities performed at Gayā are of inexhaustible merit. These rites performed by the son on the death-anniversaries of the Pitṛs shall have endless benefits.

53. The Pitṛs who are over whelmed by the fear of hell desire for sons, hoping thus, "The son who goes to Gayā will redeem us."

54. Whatever is given to the Pitṛs at Gayā in the following places is of everlasting benefit. viz. Dharma Pṛṣṭha, the assembly of Brahmā, Gayaśīrṣa and the Akṣaya Vaṭa.

55. After visiting Brahmāraṇya, Dharmapṛṣṭha and Dhenukāraṇya one should worship the Pitṛs. He will thereby redeem twenty members of his family.

56. The sin committed in the course of great Kalpa perishes as soon as one reaches Gayā. The Śrāddha offered at the 'Bull' and at the Gṛdhravaṭa* (Banyan tree at Gṛdhra-kūṭa) yields great benefit.

57. The pada (foot-print) of sage Mataṅga** is seen there by all men. The entire essence of Dharma has been proclaimed as an example to the people.

58. That grove of lotuses wherein Pāṇḍu had entered (?) and which is frequented by meritorious persons is holy and sacred. It is a holy centre that is a model for all.

59. On the third side at the foot of the śilā in the precinct of (the lotus-pond called) Nikṣira.*** and on the bank of the deep pool of the Kauśiki,[1] the śrāddha that is offered yields great benefit.

60. His foot was placed on the Muṇḍapṛṣṭha hill by the intelligent Mahādeva. Penance very difficult to be performed

*Mentioned in *Mbh. Vana* 84.91. The Gṛdhra-kūṭa hill is to the left of the (Preta) Śilā. The *Gṛdhravaṭa* in the NP is the same as *Gṛdhrakūṭa-vaṭa* in the *Vāyu* 108.63.

**_Mbh. Vana_ 84, 101 refers to Mataṅga's hermitage and not to the foot-print.

***vide *Vāyu P.* 108.83-84.

1. One of the rivers invited by sage Lomaśa there (vide *Vāyu* 108.81)

was gone through for many hundreds of years in the holy places.

61. Here, a man devoted to Dharma casts off immediately his sins in the course of a short while, like serpent that casts off its old slough.

62. There itself to the north of Muṇḍapṛṣha (mountain) is the holy centre well-known by the name of Kanakananda. It is frequented by groups of Brāhmaṇa sages.

63. By taking their holy dips therein, men go to heaven in their physical bodies. The Śrāddha offered there is cited to be always of ever-lasting benefit.

64. O lady of beautiful eyes, the devotee must take a holy dip for three days in the Nikṣira and in the lake Mānasa. He shall then perform Śrāddha there.

65-66a. By going to the lake called northern Mānasa* one attains excellent Siddhi. He who offers Śrāddha there in accordance with his influence and capacity attains all divine desires and all the means of liberation.

66b-68. Thereafter, the devotee should go to Brahmaśiras that is embellished of necessity by Brahmā. He shall attain the world of Brahmā. Early in the morning, immediately after it had dawned, a holy sacrificial post was fixed in that lake** by Brahmā. By circumambulating the sacrificial post, he shall obtain the benefit of Vājapeya sacrifice. Thereafter, O blessed lady, he should go to Dhenuka well known throughout the worlds.

69. The devotee should observe fast and spend a night there. He should then offer a cow with gingelly seeds (or replica of a cow made of gingelly seeds). Liberated from all sins he shall certainly go to the world of Soma (the moon-god).

70-72. O highly blessed lady, even today highly wonderful prints are seen there. A tawny-coloured cow grazes on the mountain along with calf. O Mohinī, the marks of the

**Uttara and dakṣiṇa Mānasa* are the tanks at Gayā. *Vāyu P.* ch. 111.4 and 8

**Cf. *Vāyu* 111.30-33. The NP seems to have skipped over the visit to the Bodhi tree (mentioned in the *Vāyu* 111.26-29)

hoofs of that cow and calf are seen (even today). If there is any inauspicious Karman, it perishes the moment these foot-prints are seen by those leading men. Thereafter, he should go to the Gṛdhravaṭa, the abode of the intelligent lord (Śiva).

73-74. After applying Bhasman over the body the devotee should perform the Bhasmasnāna (Bath in ashes) and then approach the bull-bannered lord. O gentle lady, the holy observance of the Brāhmaṇas lasts for twelve years. In the case of all other castes, all the sins perish thereby. Thereafter, the devotee should go to the Udyāna mountain reverberating with songs.

75. The Brāhmaṇa of praiseworthy holy observances should perform Sandhyā prayers at the place where the highly meritorious foot-print of Śāvitrī is seen.

76-78. That has the benefit of (performance of) a twelve years Sandhyā prayer. O daughter of Brahmā, the Yonidvāra hill is also there. If a person passes through it, he is liberated from the torture of vaginal passage (i.e. rebirth). The king who resides in Gayā for both the fort-nights, the bright and the dark sanctifies seven generations of his family. Thereafter, O blessed lady, he should go to Dharmapṛṣṭha that yields great benefits.

79. By going to that place where Dharma, the protector of the world of the Pitṛs is himself stationed, the devotee shall attain the benefit of horse sacrifice.

80. Thereafter, the man should go to the excellent holy centre of Brahmā. By approaching and worshipping Brahmā there, the devotee attains the benefit of the Rājasūya sacrifice.

81. The holy centre of Phalgu tīrtha is well known. It is endowed with many roots and fruits. The Śrāddha performed in the place where the river Kauśikī flows is remembered as yielding ever-lasting benefits.

82-83. Thereafter, he should go to the mountain (Gayaśiras) protected by the king conversant with piety. It is being enjoyed by the meritorious king Gaya. It is here that the sacred river Mahānadī (i.e. Phalgu) flows. The lake Gayaśiras is also

here. The holy lake Brahmasaras is frequented by sages and is exceedingly meritorious.

84. It was here that the holy sage Agastya went towards Vaivasvata Yama; the eternal ruler of Dharma stayed here always.

85. Here the outcome of all the rivers is seen. The Pināka-bearing Mahādeva is continuously present here.

86-87a. There is the world-famous Akṣayavaṭa (the ever-lasting banyan tree).Formerly, Gaya performed a sacrifice here and worshipped the deity. The most excellent river (Phalgu) which was protected in the sacrifices of Gaya is also present there.

87b-88a. At Gayā, one must see the Muṇḍa-Pṛṣṭha, the divine mountain Raivata and the third Krauñcapāda. On seeing them one is liberated from sins.

88b-89a By seeing Śaṁkara in the Śivanadī, Gadādhara at Gayā and the great Ātman everywhere, one is liberated from multitudes of sins.

89b-90. The goddess at Varanasi is Viśālākṣī, Lalitā at Prayāga; goddess named Maṅgalā at Gayā and Saiṁhikā (in the place called) Kṛta-śauca. Whatever a person gives while staying at Gayā attains infinite and ever-lasting benefits.

91. His Pitṛs (forefathers) are delighted by his excellent Karman (rites). The Pitṛs consider themselves really blessed with sons when they stay at Gayā and offer cooked rice-balls to the Pitṛs.

CHAPTER FORTYFIVE

The Procedure of offering Piṇḍas[1] (*in the Gayā-Yātrā*)

Vasu continued :

1. O Mohinī, listen, I shall now recount to you the merit accruing from Preta-Śilā (a part of Śilā – or a stone slab which is a hill supposed to have been placed on Gayāsura's head to stabilise him). By offering Piṇḍas (balls of rice) at it, one uplifts one's forefathers (from their present status in after-life).

2. The foot of the Śilā is covered by a hill* called Prabhāsa. Being pleased with sages (who propitiated him), Prabhāsa emerged out of the big-toe of the Śilā.

3. God Śiva abides in that "toe"(of the Śilā) and hence is glorified as Prabhāseśa. It is a part of the big toe of the Śilā and that whole is called Preta-Śilā.

4a. A person who offers balls of rice (Piṇḍas) there (at the Preta-Śilā) redeems his forefathers from ghost-hood.

4b-6a. The man who takes bath at the meeting-place of the great river Phalgu and Prabhāsa hill, will himself become

1. Offering of *Piṇḍa* (balls of rice) to *Pitṛs—Piṇḍa-dāna* has an important place in the pilgrimage to Gayā. This chapter has a close textual similarity with the *Vāyu* P. 108. 12ff.

As the NP. has borrowed a number of verses from the *Gayā Yātrā* section of the *Vāyu* P., it is not necessary to locate every verse that way. A few verses are however noted below as a specimen :

NP.	*Vāyu p.* (*Ch.* 108)
8b-9a.	20
9b-10a.	23
10b-11a.	22
11b-12a.	28
12b-13a.	29a.
13b-14a.	30 etc. etc.

*The reading *Prabhāsenātriṇā* in the NP is meaningless. It should have been *Prabhāsenādriṇā*, as *Prabhāsa* is the name of a hillock at Gayā. The *Vāyu* which gives a full-fledged Gayā Māhātmya reads this line thus : *āechāditaḥ śilāpādaḥ prabhāsenādriṇā yataḥ* // 108.13

Vāmadeva. Hence it is remembered as Vāma-tīrtha*.

When, on being requested Rāma performed ablution in the Mahānadī (Phalgu), that place of bath came to be known as Rāma-Tīrtha since then. It completely purifies all the people.

6b-7a. Whatever sins have been committed by men in thousands of their previous births—all that sin gets dissolved (by taking a bath in Rāma Tīrtha).

7b-9a. Having taken bath while chanting the Mantra : "O Rāma ! Rāma of mighty arms who afford protection (and freedom from fear) to gods ! O Lord of gods ! I shall pay obeisance to you. May my sins perish.", a man should perform Śrāddha. He who offers Piṇḍas (balls of rice to Pitṛs) at Rāma-Tīrtha is honoured in the world of Viṣṇu.

9b-11. After bowing him down, one should go to refulgent Śiva, Prabhāseśa. After paying homage to Śambhu (Śiva), one should offer oblation (food with Kuśa-grass, sesame and water) to Yama (with the prayer) : "O lord of gods ! You are the waters as well as the Lord of luminaries. Annihilate instantly my sins committed by me with my mind, word and deed." (As the legend goes, when Gayāsura began to move) god Yama occupied the rear of the Śilā (to stabilise it with his weight.)

*The verse in the NP reads :

Vāmadevaḥ svayam bhūyād Vāma-Tīrthaṁ tataḥ smṛtam / 5 a. This verse as printed in the NP (and translated above) is irrelevant in the context, as the next verse shows that the *Tīrtha* became *Rāma-Tīrtha* when Rāma took bath in the great river Phalgu. The editors of the NP printed *atri* for original *adri* and brought in Vāmadeva from the blue. The original verse in the *Vāyu P.* is as follows :

Mahānadī-prabhāsādryoḥ saṅgame snāna-kṛn naraḥ /
Rāmo devyā saha snāto Rāma-Tīrthaṁ tataḥ smṛtam //—108.16

"Rāma along with his queen Sītā took bath at the meeting place of Mahānadī (Phalgu) and Prabhāsa hill. Thence-forth it came to be remembered as Rāma-Tīrtha".

At Gayā actually there is a Rāma-Tīrtha as mentioned in the verse in the *Vāyu P.* but no Rāma-Tīrtha is noted in the NP. In the next verse both the *Vāyu* and the *NP* note that Rāma was requested to take bath in the Phalgu. This agreement shows the Printing mistakes of the NP text about Vāmadeva and Atri (for *adri*)

12. Then the hill (viz. Śilā) was ordered by Dharma-rāja, "Do not go (move)" and hence it came to be remembered as "Na-ga" (motion-less). Yama-rāja and Dharma-rāja have stationed themselves here to bring stability and fixity.

13-14a. (After offering bali to these two gods, one should offer bali to their two dogs Śyāma and Śabala with the Mantra) "I shall offer Piṇḍa to two dogs Śyāma (a black-coloured dog) and Śabala (a dog of variegated colours) born of the family of Vaivasvata. May they be non-violent to me."

14b-15a. In the holy Tīrtha, on the Preta-Śilā and other places, the person should invoke the Pitṛs with the offerings of Caru (an oblation of rice) alongwith ghee. He should then offer the Piṇḍas chanting the mantras.

15b-16a. On the hillock near Gayā known as Preta-parvata, the person should meditate on the Pitṛs with self-restraint and concentration. He should wear the sacred thread over the right shoulder and passed under the left arm. Facing the south, he should meditate thus :

16b-19a. "May the following highly fortunate ones who have been protected by you come here—viz. Anala (the fire-god) who is the conveyor of oblations to Pitṛs (Kavya-vāha), Yama, Aryaman, the Pitṛ-devatās (the manes as deities) who are consumed by fire (Agniṣvātta), deceased ancestors (of a particular class) who imbibe Soma juice." I have come here to Gayā for offering balls of rice to those of my ancestors (Pitṛs) who had been born in the family and who are my kindred. May all of them attain permanent satisfaction by the efficacy of this Śrāddha."

19b-20. He should then perform the Ācamana rite and repeat the five items in the almanac and restrain the breath assiduously. He should then perform the Saṅkalpa rite (of vowing solemnly the performance of Śrāddha) thus : (This is) "For the the acquisition of the world of Brahmā from which there is no return." After performing this Saṁkalpa (rite of taking the solemn vow), he should duly perform Śrāddha in due order.

21. After first sanctifying the spot with the Pañcagavya ingredients severally, he should invoke the Pitṛs, worship them and offer Piṇḍas to them with the mantras.

22-23. After offering Śrāddha to Sapiṇḍas (nearest kins to whom the Piṇḍas—rice balls—are due), to their south he should spread over Kuśa grass over which he should offer once the libations of gingelly seeds and water. The Pitṛ-Tīrtha (holy water intended for the manes) should be assiduously taken in a single handful. He should then offer the everlasting Piṇḍa with a handful of fried barley-meal.

24. He should offer gingelly seeds, ghee, curds, honey etc. alongwith the articles for the balls of rice. He should invoke the kinsmen onto the Kuśa grass by means of gingelly seeds etc.

25. If the Śrāddha is for a lady, the Mantras must be uttered using the feminine gender suitably. The invocation of the Pitṛs is as before and he should offer the Piṇḍas too as before.

26. In regard to the offering of Piṇḍas to a couple of one's own Gotra or of a different Gotra, the Śrāddha, the Piṇḍa or the water libation, if not offered separately, becomes futile.

27-28. He should put gingelly seeds in the vessel of the Piṇḍas and fill it with auspicious waters. With the following Mantra he should sprinkle the Piṇḍas in the (clock-wise) form of a circle three times. He should bow down to all of them and crave their forgiveness. After bidding farewell to the Pitṛs and performing the Ācamana rite, he shall cite the Devas as witnesses.

29.[1] O Mohinī, in all the places, the offering of the Piṇḍas should be in this manner. In the offering of the Piṇḍas at Gayā one shall not think much of the time.

30. One must not perform Gayāśrāddha during the intercalary lunar month, on the birth day, at the setting of Jupiter and Venus, and when the Jupiter is in the Siṁharāśi (Leo).

31. A mendicant who does not want to offer Piṇḍas should after going to Gayā, exhibit his staff. By placing his staff at the Viṣṇu-pada (the foot-print of Viṣṇu), he is liberated alongwith his ancestors.

32. It is laid down in the scriptures that the Piṇḍas to be offered at Gayā can be made of milk pudding, powdered fried grain, pounded gingelly seeds, Carus, rice grains etc.

1. VV. 15-29 describe the procedure of Śrāddha at Gayā.

33. O blessed lady, on seeing Gayā, even a sinner guilty of great sins shall be sanctified and deserve holy rites. He who performs Śrāddha attains the world of Brahmā.

34. Even a person who performs thousands of horse-sacrifices does not attain that benefit which one attains in the Phalgutīrtha.

35. After reaching Gayā, the pilgrim should offer the Piṇḍas of which the Pitṛs are very fond. Delay should not be made, nor should any obstacles be put therein.

36-37. (Mantra)—"Balls of rice are offered by me to these viz.—Father, grandfather, great-grandfather, mother, grand-mother and great-grandmother, maternal grandfather and his father, maternal great-grandfather and others. May these Piṇḍas reach them and be of everlasting benefits.[1]

38. I am giving this Piṇḍa for the uplift of those persons in our family who are dead but who have not as yet attained salvation.

39. I am giving this Piṇḍa for the uplift of those persons among our kinsmen and their families who have not as yet attained salvation.

40. I am giving the Piṇḍa for the uplift of those persons who are dead before cutting their teeth or even while they were in the foetus stage.

41. I am giving the Piṇḍa unto those men some of whom are burnt in fire (that is who are cremeated properly) and others who are not properly cremated, and those who were killed by lightning or by thieves.

42. I am giving the Piṇḍa unto those men who died in the forest fire, who were killed by lions and tigers and those who were killed by fanged or horned animals.

43. I am giving this Piṇḍa to those who died by hanging themselves, those who were killed with poison or through weapons and those who had committed suicide (otherwise).

1. VV. 36-37 show the breadth of outlook of the performer of *Srāddha* in offering *Piṇḍas*. cf. *Vāyu* 110. 23-59.

44. I am giving this Piṇḍa to those who died due to thirst and hunger in the forest or on the way to the forest and those who were killed by goblins, ghosts or spirits.

45. I am giving this Piṇḍa to those who are lying in hells—Raurava, Tāmisra and Kālasūtra in order to uplift them.

46. I am giving this Piṇḍa to redeem those persons who are lying in many different cells of torture and those who have gone to the world of the dead.

47. I am giving this Piṇḍa for the deliverance of those persons who had attained miseries due to imprecations and curses and were killed.

48. I am giving this Piṇḍa for the uplift of those persons who have been subjected to the control of emissaries of Yama in all the hells.

49. I am giving the Piṇḍa unto those who are born in the wombs of animals, or those who have become birds, worms, and reptiles or those who are born among the vegetable kingdom.

50. I am giving Piṇḍa to those who wander among thousands of other species of beings and to whom human birth is inaccessible.

51. I am giving this Piṇḍa to my Pitṛs, kinsmen and others stationed in the heaven, firmament or the Earth and to those who were not consecrated after death.

52. Some of my Pitṛs may be remaining in the form of ghosts. May all of them always attain satisfaction with this Piṇḍa.

53. Piṇḍa has been given by me to those who were or were not my kinsmen and to those who had been my kinsmen in other births. May this reach them and may this be of everlasting benefit.

54-56. Piṇḍa has been given by me to those who died in my father's family, to those who died in my mother's family, to those kinsmen of preceptors, father-in-law and other relatives who were dead, those who were devoid of sons and wives, in my family and hence had been deprived of these Piṇḍas; those who had gone astray due to the omission of holy rites, those who were born blind, those who were lame, those who had

been deformed, those who had been prematurely delivered of and those of my family whether known or unknown. May it reach them and be of everlasting benefit.

57. I am giving Piṇḍa alongwith Svadhā to those who were born in my father's family (tracing the origin) to Brahmā, to those who were born of my mother's family and to those who are somehow connected with me in both the families.

58. May the Devas, Brahmā, Īśāna and others bear me my witnessess that I have come down to Gayā and performed the rites of redemption to my Pitṛs.

59. "O lord, Gadādhara, I have come to Gayā for the rites of my Pitṛs. You alone are the lord and witness thereof. I am now free from the three types of debts."

60. On the next[1] day the intelligent devotee should purify himself (in body and mind) and go to Pretaparvata (the mountain of the dead).

After taking a holy dip in the Brahmakuṇḍa, the intelligent person should perform Tarpaṇa rite to the Devas and others.

61. At the Pretaparvata, the pilgrim should, with self-control and purity, invoke the Pitṛs. After performing the Saṁkalpa rite as before, he should offer the Piṇḍas.

62-63. Just as the serpents afraid of Garuḍa, the Asuras terrified of the holy rite of Śrāddha, run away from that devotee. Their number shall be as many as that of the gingelly seeds taken by the men in the holy rite of the Pitṛs, after worshipping the great Pitṛ-deities by means of their own Mantras. O Mohinī, there also he should perform all the rites as before.

64-66a. So also, he should scatter the powdered fried grains mixed with gingelly seeds on that Pretaparvata saying—"With these fried grains of barley powdered and mixed with gingelly seeds may all the Pitṛs of mine be satisfied—those Pitṛs who may remain in the form of ghosts. Beginning with Brahmā

1. This is the 2nd day of Gayā Yātrā. Preta-Parvata is a hill to the NW of Gayā at a distance of four miles (*Gavyūti*). The Brahma-Kuṇḍa mentioned here is the foot of the NE part of Preta-Parvata (*Tristhalī-Setu* p. 355). Compare the text from v. 60 ff. with *Vāyu* p. 110. 8 ff.

and ending with a blade of grass whatever living being mobile or immobile there may be, let it be entirely satisfied with the Piṇḍa offered by me."

66b. At the outset this is the proccdure in the northern Mānasa* lake among the five holy Tīrthas.[1]

67. With the Kuśa grass in the hand, the pilgrim should sprinkle his head with water after the Ācamana rite. He should then go to the northern Mānasa lake and perform the rite of ablution repeating this Mantra.

68. "I am taking the holy dip in the northern Mānasa lake for the purity of myself, for attaining the world of the sun etc. and for the liberation of my Pitṛs."

69-70. After the holy bath, he should duly perform the rite of Tarpaṇa for the Devas and others. "May every one—Devas, sages, Pitṛs and human beings, beginning with Brahmā and ending with the blade of grass—may all the Pitṛs, mothers, maternal grandfathers and others be satisfied."

He shall perform the rite of Śrāddha alongwith the offerings of the Piṇḍas in accordance with the injunctions laid down in one's particular Sūtra.

71. In Aṣṭakas, in Vṛddhi-Śrāddha, at Gayā, and on the anniversary of death, one should offer Śrāddha separately to one's mother but on all other occasions with her husband (i.e. with one's father.)**

72. (Mantra) "Oṁ Obeisance be to lord Bhānu (the sun) who has the forms of the moon, of Mars, of Mercury, of Jupiter, of Venus, of Saturn, of Rāhu, and of Ketu."

73. By bowing down to the sun and worshipping him, the devotee shall take Pitṛs to the world of the sun. Here

*The five *Tīrthas* are Uttara-mānasa, Udicī-tīrtha, Kanakhala, Dakṣina-Mānasa and Phalgu. Phalgu Tirtha is the same as Gayā-Śiras vide *Vāyu P.* 111.1-22.

1. As per *Vāyu* Ch. 111 these *Pañca-Tīrthī* rites are to be performed on the 3rd day of this Yātrā.

**Cf. Vāyu P. 110.17.

there is the Mānasa lake and beyond that is the northern Mānasa.

74. Observing silence, the pilgrim should go from the northern Mānasa to the Southern Mānasa*. To the north of it, is the Udīcītīrtha which is the bestower of liberation.

75. To the north of the hill Muṇḍapṛṣṭha, the devotee should perform the Tarpaṇa rite of Devas, sages and Pitṛs. The holy centre of Kanakhala is in the middle. It yields salvation to the Pitṛs.

76. After taking bath (in Kanakhala Tīrtha), the man shines like gold and attains sanctity. Hence, this holy centre is well known as the excellent Kanakhala Tīrtha.

77. To the South of it is the Tīrtha (holy bathing place) called Dakṣiṇa Mānasa (Southern Mānasa). Thus three Tīrthas are cited in the Dakṣiṇa Mānasa (as its constituents).

78-79. After duly bathing in them, the pilgrim should perform the Śrāddha separately (at each) (saying) "O Divākara (sun) I am bathing in the Dakṣiṇamānasa for the destruction of the masses of sins of Brāhmaṇa-slaughter etc. and for liberation." With this Mantra he should perform the rites of ablution, worship and Śrāddha alongwith the offerings of Piṇḍas.

80-81a. "I bow down to the sun-god for the redemption of the Pitṛs and their satisfaction as well as for the increase of sons, grandsons, wealth, prosperity, longevity, and health." After looking at the sun and worshipping him silently the devotee should repeat this Mantra.

81b-82. "May the deities of Pitṛs, 'Kavyavāha' (fire god) and others be propitiated alongwith my Pitṛs. May the partakers of Svadhā be propitiated". Thereafter, he should go to Phalgutīrtha that is the most excellent of all holy centres.

83. The performer shall attain liberation always, thanks to the Śrāddha of the Pitṛs. Formerly when he was requested by Brahmā, Viṣṇu became the holy Tīrtha Phalguka.

*The three *Tīrthas* constituting Dakṣiṇa Mānasa are Udicī-Tīrtha of the North, Kanakhala (in the middle) and Dakṣiṇa Mānasa to the South.

84. It had originated from the Dakṣiṇāgni (sacrificial fire) that is the sacred river of Phalgu. It yields plenty of fruits. Cows will be Kāmadhenus. The Phalgu water will facilitate the growth of fruits. The earth yields water (?)

85-86. Since this comes under the creation (of Lord himself) above [or from under-ground], Phalgutīrtha is never futile. There is no doubt that all the sacred rivers and bathing places in all the worlds come to Phalgutīrtha for taking bath. The Gaṅgā is the water coming out of the foot of Viṣṇu. But the Phalgu is the primordial Viṣṇu himself.[1]

87. Hence, they know that Phalgu is superior to Gaṅgā. From the plunge into the waters of the Phalgu, one derives the benefit equal to thousands of horse-sacrifices.

88. "I am taking bath today in the holy Phalgutīrtha which is the watery form of Viṣṇu. It is for facilitating the attainment of Viṣṇu's world by the Pitṛs and for the achievement of worldly pleasures and liberation."

89. After bathing in the Phalgutīrtha the man should perform the rites of Tarpaṇa and Śrāddha alongwith the Piṇḍas as prescribed in his own Sūtra. He shall bow down to Brahmā.

90. "Obeisance to lord Śiva, Īśāna, Puruṣa, Aghora, Vāmadeva, Sadyojāta, Śambhu."

91-93. After bowing down to lord Brahmā the Pilgrim should worship with the above mantra. After taking bath in the Phalgutīrtha, after visiting lord Viṣṇu and after bowing down to the lord, the devotee takes himself along with the Pitṛs to the region of Viṣṇu.

"Om obeisance to Vâsudeva. Bow to Saṁkarṣaṇa, to Pradyumna, to Aniruddha, to Śrīdhara and to Viṣṇu. By taking bath in the Pañcatīrthī (the collection of the above five holy bathing places) the devotee takes his Pitṛs to the world of Brahmā.

94. If anyone does not make Viṣṇu bathe in fivefold nectars or does not embellish Viṣṇu with flowers, garments, etc. his Śrāddha goes futile.

1. *Vāyu* 111. 16.

95. The place bounded by Nāgakūṭa, Gṛdhrakūṭa, Viṣṇukūṭa and Uttaramānasa is called Gayāśiras. It is also called Phalgutīrtha.

96-97. The excellent Phalgutīrtha is beneath the mountain Muṇḍapṛṣṭha. By performing Śrāddha there, all the Pitṛs shall attain salvation. At Gayāśiras the devotee should offer Piṇḍas of the size of the leaf of a Śamī tree. The devotee shall lead into the permanent Brahman, the person uttering whose name he had offered the Piṇḍas.

98. The Lord of unmanifest form, after assuming the form of the mountain Muṇḍapṛṣṭha or the form of Phalgutīrtha etc., bows down to Viṣṇu.

99. He who has assumed the state of non-manifestation by taking the form of (Preta) Śilā-parvata, the Phalgu, etc.— that Ādi-Viṣṇu presented manifest form as Gadādhara the wielder of the mace.

100. Thereafter,[1] the devotee shall go to the forest called Dharmāraṇya where Dharma (god Vāma)[2] is well established. After taking bath in the tank of Mataṅgavāpī the devotee should perform the rites of Tarpaṇa and Śrāddha.

101-102. After going there and bowing down to Mataṅgeśa the devotee shall utter this Mantra :—

"The deities are the authorities, Śambhu and the guardians of the worlds (quarters) are the witnesses. After coming to Mataṅga Kṣetra, atonement for redemption of the Pitṛs has been performed by me in this Mataṅga (vāpi). At the outset, the devotee should perform Śrāddha etc. in the well called Brahmatīrtha.

103-104. By performing (the Śrāddha etc) in between the well and the sacrificial post (viz. Brahma-Yūpa) the devotee shall redeem Pitṛs. After bowing to Dharma, and Dharme-

1 This is on the 4th day from entering Gayā.

2. Although B. M. Barua regards Dharma and Dharmāraṇya as referring to the Buddha *Gayā* (*Buddha-Gayā* I. p. 22). I follow Kane (H. D. IV 664 Ft. Note 1501) and interpret Dharma as Yama-Dharma. It may be noted that along with the *Araṇyas* (forests, Parks) viz. Puṣkara and Naimiṣa, Dharmāraṇya is recommended for *Piṇḍa-dāna* (*Pd. P. Sṛṣṭi* II. 73).

śvara, the devotee shall bow down to the tree Mahābodhi (tree of great enlightenment).

Thus the duties of the second day of (pañca-tīrthī) pilgrimage to Gayā[1] have been recounted to you by me. It is conducive to the happiness of the Pitṛs by means of holy dips, Tarpaṇa rites, offering of balls of rice, worship, obeisance, etc.

CHAPTER FORTYSIX

Importance of offering Piṇḍas (at Gayā)[*]

Vasu said :

1. Henceforth, I shall recount to you the duties on the third day.[2] They yield both the worldly pleasures as well as salvation. They yield the benefit of contact with Gayā.

2-3. After taking bath in the Brahmasaras, the pilgrim should perform Śrāddha alongwith the Piṇḍas:

"I take my holy bath in this Tīrtha for the liberation from the three-fold indebtedness, for conducting Śrāddha, for offering Piṇḍas, for the rite of Tarpaṇa and for the achievement of wealth."

He who performs that (the Śrāddha etc.) between the well called 'Brahmakūpa' and the sacrificial post (raised by Brahmā—) 'Brahma yūpa' redeems the Pitṛs.

4. The lofty sacrificial post is that of Brahmā. By performing Śrāddha at the Brahmasaras, the devotee shall take the Pitṛs to the world of Brahmā.

1. This 2nd day of the *Pañca-Tīrthī* rites is the 4th day from entering Gayā.

*Most of the verses in this chapter are identical with those in the *Vāyu P.* 111.32-75.

2. The 3rd day of *Pañca-Tīrthī* rites corresponds to the 5th day from entering Gayā.

5. The mango trees near Gopracāra were planted by Brahmā. Merely by sprinkling them with water (from Brahmasaras), the Pitṛs will attain salvation.

6. "I water the Mango tree that has grown out of Brahmasaras, that is lordly and containing all the Devas and that is the embodiment of Viṣṇu, for the sake of salvation of the Pitṛs.

7. A sage with a pot and the Kuśa grass at the tip of his hands pours water at the root of the mango tree. The Mango trees are watered and the Pitṛs are propitiated. A single action is well reputed as serving two purposes.* A man who performs the Ācamana rite and pours water at the root is not negligible (even) to gods.

8. By circumambulating the sacrificial post (of Brahmā) one shall attain the benefit of the Vājapeya sacrifice. By bowing down to Brahmā the devotee takes the Pitṛs to the city of Brahmā.

9. "Oṁ, Hail to Brahmā, who is eternal (unborn) and who is the cause of creation, etc. of the Universe; obeisance, to the redeemer of the devotees and the Pitṛs.

10-11. With the following Mantra he should offer oblation to Yama, with mental control : "Yamarāja and Dharamarāja are steadily stationed here. I offer oblation to them for the purpose of liberation of the Pitṛs." O Mohinī, he then offers oblation to the dogs with the Mantra mentioned before :

12-13. Thereafter, with self-control, the devotee should offer oblation to the crows repeating the following Mantra :

"May the crows pertaining to Indra, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Yama and Nirṛti accept the ball of rice placed by me on the ground." Thereafter, he shall take holy dip in the Brahma Tīrtha with the Kuśa grass (in his hand).

14. Thus completing the observances of the third day the intelligent pilgrim shall bow down to lord Gadādhara and maintain the vow of celibacy.

*Quoted in the *Agni P.* 115.40, the *Vāyu P.* 111.37 and *Padma Sṛṣṭi-khaṇḍa* 11.77.

15. On the fourth day,[1] the devotee should perform the rite of ablution etc, in the Phalgu tīrtha. At Gayāśiras, at various Pādas he should perform the Śrāddhas along with the Piṇḍas.[2]

16. The Gayāśiras itself has been made the support of Phalgu tīrtha. Gayāśiras extends from Krauñcapāda* to Phalgu Tīrtha.

17. (Defective)** There are mountains etc. in the Gayāśiras as well as Phalgu Tīrtha. It is the face of the demon Gaya. One shall perform the Śrāddha after bathing.

18. The primordial lord Gadādhara presiding over the manifest and unmanifest things, has assumed the from of Viṣṇupāda (and other Pādas—foot-prints) for the liberation of the Pitṛs.

19. There is the Viṣṇu-pāda (the footprint of Viṣṇu). It is divine. By its mere sight the sins are destroyed. By touching and worshipping, it is conducive to the salvation of the Pitṛs.

20. By performing Śrāddha at Viṣṇupāda alongwith the offering of the Piṇḍas the man uplifts a thousand members of his own family and takes them to Visṇu's world.

21. By performing Śrāddha at Rudrapāda, the man shall take a hundred members of his family to the city of Śiva alongwith himself. So also (with Śrāddha etc) at the auspicious Brahmapāda.

22. He who performs Śrāddha at the Dakṣiṇāgnipāda shall attain the benefit of a Vājapeya sacrifice. He who per-

1. The 4th day of *Pañca-Tīrthī* rite falls on the 6th day after entering into Gayā.

2. The *Tristhalī Setu*, p. 366 states that there is no separate *Śrāddha* on Gayāśiras apart from that performed on Viṣṇupāda and other *Pādas*.

*Vide verse 52 below : *Krauñca-pāda* is the hill Muṇḍa-Prṣṭha. On it a sage assuming the form of a heron performed penance and imprinted his (heron-like) footsteps on it. Hence it is called Krauñca-pāda (*Vāyu P.* 106.75)

**This verse is a combination of the *Vāyu P.* 111.45a and 44b out of which 17a in the NP (i.e. *Vāyu* 111.45a) is wrongly printed. The original line in the *Vāyu* is : *muṇḍa-pṛṣṭhān nagādhastāt sākṣāt tat Phalgu-Tīrthakam* / "Below the hill called Muṇḍa-Pṛṣṭha is verily that *Tirtha* called Phalgu (the Phalgu river)."

The NP. 17a runs thus :—*Gayā-śire nagādyāśca sākṣāt tat Phalgu-tīrthakam* If *nagādyās ca* is emended as *nagādhastāt* the obscurity is lessened.

forms Śrāddha at the Gārhapatyapāda shall derive the benefit of a Rājasūya sacrifice.

23. By performing Śrāddha at the Candrapāda one shall attain the benefit of a horse-sacrifice. He who performs Śrāddha at the Satyapāda shall attain the benefit of a Jyotiṣṭoma sacrifice.

24. He who performs Śrāddha at the Āvasathyapāda shall attain the world of Soma (moon). By performing Śrāddha at the* Candrapāda (Indra-pāda ?) the devotee shall lead his Pitṛs to Śakra's world.

25. He who performs Śrāddha at the Pāda of others** shall take Pitṛs to the region of Brahmā. He who performs Śrāddha at the Sūryapāda shall take sinners to the city of Arka (sun).

26. He who performs Śrāddha at the Kārttikeyapāda shall take Pitṛs to Śiva's world. By performing the rite of Śrāddha at the Agastyapāda the devotee takes Pitṛs to the world of Brahmā.

27. The Kāśyapapāda is the most excellent of all Pādas. The Pādas of Viṣṇu, Rudra and Brahmā are cited to be the greatest of all.

28. At the beginning or at the conclusion, one of the above Pādas is recommended. O Mohinī, he who performs Śrāddha therein, will find it conducive to welfare.

29. Formerly, the divine sage Bhāradvāja wanted to perform Śrāddha and offer the Piṇḍas to Pitṛs and others at the Pāda of Kāśyapa.***

30. Then two hands, one white and the other black, came out piercing through the Pāda. On seeing two hands, Bhāradvāja became doubtful about the real father.

31-32a. Then Bhāradvāja asked his mother Śāntā: "At the Kāśyapapāda, O mother, into which hand should I offer the

*The *Vāyu P.* reads *śakra-pāda* in the corresponding verse (111.52)

***anyeṣām ca pade* in the NP is obscure. Who are these 'others' sacred enough to enable the Pitṛs to go to *Brahmapāda* ? The *Vāyu P.* reads *Agastyasya pade* in the corresponding verse (111.53) which line occurs below in verse 26 b in the NP.

***This story is given in the Vāyu P. 111.58-63 in identical verses (as in the NP.).

Piṇḍa, the white one or the black one ? You know my father, Tell me."

32b-33. On hearing the words of the intelligent Bhāradvāja, Śāntā said with her face beaming with pleasure, to the son who was about to offer Śrāddha, "O highly intelligent Bhāradvāja give the Piṇḍa to the black one."

34. Thereupon, Bhāradvāja attempted to give the Piṇḍa to the black one. The white one became visible and said:* "O son give it to me. You are my bosom-born (legitimate) son."

35-37a. The black one said—"You are born of my wife (Kṣetraja). Hence give the Piṇḍa unto me." The white one said. "She is an unchaste woman. Hence, I am your progenitor (you are my bosom-born son). The son born of unchaste woman gave the Piṇḍa first to the Kṣetrin (the husband of the mother) and thereafter to the Bījin (the seed-giver i.e. the progenitor). O highly blessed lady, by devoutly handing over the Piṇḍas, * the excessively intelligent (Bhāradvāja) considered himself blessed, thanks to the direct talk (with the Pitṛs).

37b-38. In the course of his Śrāddha at Viṣṇupāda, Bhīṣma invoked his Pitṛs after duly performing the Śrāddha; when he attempted to offer the Piṇḍas, the pair of the hands of his father Śantanu sprang out.

39. But Bhīṣma placed the Piṇḍa on the ground since the hand is not authorised to receive the Piṇḍa directly. With delight Śantanu said :- "You are definite in the matter of the import of the scriptures.

40. Be blessed with the power of seeing the events of the three units of time. In the end, Viṣṇu will be your final goal. You can court death according to your will. After saying this he attained liberation.

41. At the beautiful Rudrapāda, Rāma attempted to give piṇḍas to the pitṛs. His father Daśaratha came down from heaven extending his hand.

*The NP does not clarify to whom Bhāradvāja gave the Piṇḍa. The corresponding verse in the *Vāyu P.* 101.63 states that Bhāradvāja offered the *Piṇḍa* at Kāśyapa's *pāda* and transported his parents to Brahmaloka in an aerial car carried by swans.

42. Rāma, who was afraid of transgressing the purport of injunction of scriptures did not give the Piṇḍa in the hand (of Daśaratha). He gave the Piṇḍa on Rudrapāda. Daśaratha then said to Rāma.

43. "O son, I have been redeemed by you. I am sure to go to Rudraloka (the world of Rudra) because the Piṇḍa is offered at the foot of Rudra. If it had been placed in my hand I would not have attained the heavenly goal.

44-45. You will rule kingdom for a long time. After protecting your subjects and after performing Yajñas with appropriate Dakṣiṇās, you will go to Viṣṇu's world alongwith the citizens of Ayodhyā and even worms, insects and other beings. After saying this to Rāma, the king went to the world of Rudra.

46. After worshipping Kanakeśa, Kedāra, Narasiṁha and Vāmana on the high way (that is the path of the chariot) the devotee shall redeem the Pitṛs.

47. If the devotee performs the rite of Piṇḍadāna in the name of anyone at Gayāśiras, they go to heaven even if they are in the hell and if they are in the heavenly world they will attain salvation.

48. He who offers Piṇḍa at Gayāśiras, even of the size of a śamī leaf, or with bulbous roots, roots, fruits, etc. shall lead the Pitṛs to the heaven.

49. By offering Śrāddha in front of the Pādas of Viṣṇu etc. seen there, the devotee takes the Pitṛs to those worlds of the deities at whose foot the Śrāddha was offered.

50. The mountain Muṇḍapṛṣṭha is marked everywhere by these pādas (footprints). The Pitṛs who are worshipped there attain the region of Brahmā.

51. The Tīrtha here is known as Gadāloka since the head of the demon Gaya[1] had been split into two by Ādi-Gadādhara with the Gadā (iron club) and since the Gadā was washed in the Tīrtha.*

1. This must be a misprint. It was the head of demon Heti and not of Gaya that was split by Viṣṇu (*vide Vāyu* 11, 75).

*In the stream Phalgu.

52. A sage performəd penance in the form of a Krauñca (heron), on the mountain Muṇḍapṛṣṭha. Due to the markings of his feet on that hill it is remembered as Krauñcapāda.

53. The feet of Viṣṇu and others are stationed here in the form of Liṅgas. After performing the rite of Tarpaṇa for the Devas and others the Śrāddha should be performed at Rudrapāda and other spots.

54. O Mohinī, after performing these rites on the fourth day, the devotee becomes sanctified. He then becomes eligible for the rites. The performer of the Śrāddha attains the world of Brahmā.

55. The devotee should take holy dips in the Śilā Tīrthas and perform the Tarpaṇa rites. These on behalf of whom they perform the Śrāddha along with the Piṇḍas go to the world of Brahmā.

56-57. They will stay there and sport about as long as the living beings are not dissolved. All living beings whether sweat-born, oviparous or viviparous, attain Sāyujya with Viṣṇu by abandoning their bodies on the back of the rock. They attain salvation along with seven hundred members of their families.

CHAPTER FORTYSEVEN

The Glory of Gayā

Vasu said :

1*. On the fifth day, the devotee should perform the holy ablution etc. in the Gadāloka tīrtha as before and then perform the Śrāddha alongwith the Piṇḍas under the Akṣayavaṭa (everlasting Banyan tree).

2. By performing Śrāddha there the pilgrim shall take Pitṛs to the city of Brahmā. Thereafter, he should feed and worship the Brāhmaṇas appointed by Brahmā.

*For vv. 1-10 cf Vāyu P. 111.79-83. This fifth day corresponds to the seventh day after entering Gayā. vide *Agni P.* 115.69-73.

3-4a. He who, with special efforts, performs the rite of Śrāddha at the Aksayavaṭa along with this and visits, salutes, and worships Vaṭeśa (the Lord of the Banyan tree) with concentration and purity of mind shall take his Pitṛs to the everlasting and eternal city of Brahmā.[1]

4b-8. "For the sake of purity and for attaining everlasting heavenly bliss I take my holy bath in the great and excellent Tīrtha called Gadāloka wherein the iron club of Lord Viṣṇu had been washed. He who assumes the form of a baby and sleeps at the tip of the banyan tree in Yogic slumber is called Yogaśāyin. Obeisance be to you the Yogaśāyin. Hail to you with the weapon with which the tree of worldly existence is cut.

Obeisance be to you the destroyer of all sins. Bow to the giver of ever-lasting Brahman; obeisance to the everlasting Vaṭa (Banyan tree.)"

"In this Kali age the people are devotees (followers) of Maheśvara. Hence, Gadādhara assumed the form of a Liṅga. I salute to you the (great grandfather of that nature." By bowing down to that great grandfather (of the Universe) at Rudrapāda, the devotee leads the Pitṛs to the region of Rudra.

9-10a. The lord killed the Asura Heti. His head was split into two with the iron club. Where the club was washed by the Lord the Tīrtha came to be called Gadāloka. It became the most excellent of all holy centres.[2]

10b. Heti was a Rākṣasa. He was the son of Brahmā. He performed a great and wonderful penance.

11-12. He chose the boon from the delighted bestowers of boons viz. Brahmā and others. They had been pleased with him on account of his penance. So he chose the boon thus :- "I should become very mighty. I must not be killed by Kṛṣṇa, Īśāna and others with their weapons viz. discus, etc. I must not be killed by human beings nor by Daityas and others with their different

1. VV. 6b-8a are the same as *Vāyu* 111. 83-84.
2. Identical with *Vāyu* 111. 75.

weapons and missiles. "They said "So be it." and then vanished. Thereafter, Heti conquered the Devas.

13. Heti occupied the post of Indra. Then Brahmā, Hara and other Devas resorted to Hari and requested him 'Kindly kill Heti.'

14. Hari said :- "O Devas, this Heti cannot be killed, by Devas and Asuras. Give me the Brahmāstra (the missile of Brahmā) whereby I shall kill Heti."

15. Thus ordered, the Devas gave that Gadā (iron-club) to Viṣṇu. Aja (Brahmā) and others said – "O Upendra kill Heti (with this)".

16. Requested by the Devas, Gadādhara wielded that Gadā. After striking Heti down in the battle with that iron club Gadādhara gave heavenly world to the Devas.

17. The pilgrim should observe fast and take bath in the river Mahānadī, the Phalgu in front of the deity Gāyatrī. Then he should perform Sandhyā prayers.

18-19a. After performing Śrāddha along with Piṇḍas the devotee shall be able to lead his family to the abode of Brahmā. After taking bath in the Tīrtha situated in front of Sāvitrī and performing Sandhyā rites at Midday, the devotee shall be able to lead the Pitṛs to the abode of Brahmā.

19b-20.* The pilgrim who takes bath in the (Eastern Sarasvatī and observes the rite of Sandhyā prayers, in the evening in front of Sarasvatī shall lead the family to omniscience. He is purified from the sin of omission of the Sandhyā prayers in the course of many births.

21-22. He who performs Śrāddha and offers Piṇḍas in the following places shall lead a hundred ancestors to the world of Brahmā. They are the holy centre of Lelihāna in the Viśālā (city), the hermitage of Bharata, the Muṇḍapṛṣṭha hill marked by the different foot-prints near Gadādhara, in the Tīrtha of Ākāśagaṅgā (celestial Gaṅgā) and at the confluence of Girikarṇa (the Sabarmatī).

*There are a number of identical verses : 19ff in NP here and *Vāyu P.* 112.23 ff (to the end of that chapter).

23-24.* He who takes holy bath in the Gayāvaitaraṇī (Vaitaraṇi at Gayā) shall uplift twentyone generations of his family. He who offers Piṇḍas in the following places shall lead Pitṛs to the heaven.—They are the Gopracāra in the divine river the region of Mānasa lake, the Puṣkariṇī (lotus pond), the Tīrtha of Gadāloka; the Amaraka, the Koṭi-Tīrtha and the Rukmakuṇḍa.

25-26. The devotee shall be the redeemer of the Pitṛs by bowing down to Koṭīśa and Mārkaṇḍeyeśa. By the mere vision of the merit bestowing Pāṇḍuśilā, even the persons stationed in hell shall be sanctified. The devotee shall lead them to the heaven. After saying this, Pāṇḍu attained the eternal and unchanging region.

27. (The sacred rivers at Gayā are) Ghṛtakulyā, Madhukulyā, Devikā, Mahānada (Phalgu) and the Madhusravā is glorified where it comes in contact with Preta śilā.

28-29a. By taking bath there, a man attains the benefits of ten thousand horse sacrifices. By performing the Tarpaṇa rite for the Pitṛs and by offering Śrāddha along with the Piṇḍas, the man uplifts a thousand members of the family and takes them to the city of Viṣṇu.

29b33. Even the vegetable kingdom, the sweet-born animals, the oviparous and vixiparous beings—all these dying on reaching the Madhusravā attained Viṣṇu's region. By performing Śrāddha in the Haṁsa Tīrtha that is as meritorious as the Daśāśvamedha, the devotee shall attain heaven.

31. By bowing down to the Tīrthas called Daśāśvamedha and Haṁsa the devotee shall attain the city of Śiva. He who performs Śrāddha at the Pāda of Mātaṅga shall reside in the city of Brahmā.

32. Brahmā should churn fires within the Śamī alongwith Viṣṇu and others. The Tīrtha formed thereby is called Manthakuṇḍa. It causes liberation of the Pitṛs.

*These verses mention important spots at Gayā which can be located with the help of *Vāyu P.* : Go-Pracāra (111.35-37) where mango trees were planted by Brahmā; Mānasa (N. of tanks—*Uttara M.* and *Dakṣiṇa M.* 111.6 and 8; 2 and 22), Puskaraṇī (108.84), Gadāloka (111.75-76) is the stream of Phalgu; Rukma-Kuṇḍa is probably the same as Rukmiṇī Kuṇḍa (108.84).

33. He who takes a holy dip therein, attains liberation by performing Tarpaṇa and offering Piṇḍas. By bowing down to Rameśa and Karakeśvara the devotee shall take Pitṛs to the heaven.

34. By offering Piṇḍas at the Gayākūpa the devotee attains the benefit of a horse-sacrifice. By taking Bhasma bath (smearing the body with the ashes) at the holy centre Bhasmakūṭa the devotee redeems the Pitṛs.

The man who takes holy bath at the confluence of Nikṣīra shall wash off his sins. He who performs Śrāddha in Rāmapuṣkariṇī shall take Pitrs to the world of Brahmā.

36. He who takes ablution in the river Suṣumnā shall uplift twentyone generations of his family. By bowing down to Vasiṣṭheśa in Tīrtha, the devotee has the same benefit as in a horse-sacrifice.

37. He who offers Piṇḍas in the forest Dhenuka at the footprints of Kāmadhenu after taking bath and bowing to that lord shall take Pitṛs to the world of Brahmā.

38a-39a. He who takes the holy dip and performs the Śrāddha at Kardamāla and Gayanābhi near Muṇḍapṛṣṭha hill shall take Pitṛs to the heaven by bowing down to Caṇḍikā as well as by worshipping the lord of confluence named Phalgucaṇḍīśa.

39b-40a. The following six Gayās are the bestowers of liberation viz. Gayāgaja, Gayāditya, Gāyatrī, Gadādhara, Gayā and Gayāśiras.[1] By setting a bull free at Gayā, the devotee shall uplift twentyone generations of the family.

41. The devotee who has conquered his sense organs and who has been formally permitted by Brāhmaṇas, wherever he stays, should meditate upon the primordial Gadādhara and offer Śrāddha and Piṇḍas.

42-44. He shall then uplift a hundred members of his family and lead them to the world of Brahmā. Thereafter, he should duly worship lord Janārdana and offer the excellent Naivedya of cooked rice and curds alone. The Piṇḍas should

1. The same as Vāyu P. 112. 60 ft.

be deposited and offered and the pilgrim should sustain himself on the remnants.

44. Since the rock was kept on the back or the head of the Daitya, the mountain Muṇḍapṛṣṭha is the bestower of the world of Brahmā on the Pitṛs.

45-47a. When Rāma had gone to the forest, Bharata climbed on the mountain and stood there. After installing Rāmeśa he offered Piṇḍas to his father. He who takes holy bath there, bows with concentration to Rāmeśa, Rāma and Sītā, performs Śrāddha and offers Piṇḍa shall attain the city of Viṣṇu. The righteous soul shall go to the city of Viṣṇu along with his Pitṛs, and hundreds of members of his family.

47b-48. The deity is installed on the ridge of Kuṇḍa to the right hand of the slab. By performing Śrāddha etc., there, the devotee shall lead Pitṛs to the city of Brahmā. Penance was performed by Kunda on the mountain to the south of Sītādri (the mountain of Sītā).

49. He who offers Piṇḍas on the meritorious Pāda of Mataṅga shall lead Pitṛs to the heaven. To the left hand side of the rocky slab, the mountain Antaka is held.

50. The Udayādri (The mountain of the rising-sun) was brought here and established by Agastya, the great soul. He who offers Piṇḍas there shall lead Pitṛs to the city of Brahmā.

51. God Brahmā created the sacred water Pool called Udyantaka. It was used by him for his own penance. Brahmā was stationed there along with Sāvitrī and Kumāra (i.e. Sanatkumāra).

52-53. Hāhā, Hūhū and others sang songs, and played on instruments. He who takes holy dip in the Agastya Tīrtha, and worships Sāvitrī at midday shall be born as a Brāhmaṇa endowed with wealth and mastery of the Vedas for crores of birth. He who takes holy dip at the Pāda of Agastya and offers Piṇḍas shall lead the Pitṛs to the heaven.

54. The man who enters the Brahmayoni and comes out attains the great Brahman. He will be liberated from the uterine distress. (i.e. further births) and attain Mokṣa.

55. By bowing down to Gayākumāra a man obtains Brāhmaṇahood. By means of ablutions etc. in the Somakuṇḍa the devotee shall lead his Pitṛs to the world of Soma (Moon).

56. The oblation offered at Kākasilā to the crows bestows salvation instantaneously. By bowing down to Svargadvāreśvara (Lord of the Portals of the heaven), the devotee shall take his Pitṛs from the heaven to the city of Brahmā.

57a. He who offers Piṇḍas in the Vyomagaṅgā shall become free from impurities and lead Pitṛs to the heaven.

57b-58a. To the right hand side of (Preta) śilā, god Yama Dharma sustained the Bhasma-kūṭa hill. Hence god Śiva gave it that name there.

58b-59. O Mohinī, in the place where this pile of ashes Bhasma-kūṭa) lies like a mountain and is designated Bhasma-kūṭa there is a Vaṭa (banyan tree). The great grandfather of the world Brahmā, is stationed there as the lord of the Banyan Tree. Just in front of it is the Rukmiṇīkuṇḍa and to the west of it is the river Kapilā.

60. Lord Kapileśa is on the banks of the river where the meeting of Umā and river Śiva takes place. The man shall take bath in the Kapilā and bow down to and worship Kapileśa.

61. He who offers Śrāddha in the Maheśīkuṇḍa shall attain heaven. Gaurī and Maṅgalā when worshipped there, are the bestowers of all good fortune.

62-63a. Janārdana is the deity on the Bhasmakūṭa. The devotee shall offer Piṇḍa in his hand, with the right hand,* for his own sake and with the left hand for other's sake but without gingelly seeds. Of course the Piṇḍa shall be mixed with curds. All those people shall attain the world of Viṣṇu.

63b-65. "O Janārdana, this Piṇḍa is given unto your hand by me in the course of Gayāśrāddha.[1] When I am dead, the Piṇḍa should be given to me by you. The person for whose sake the Piṇḍa has been given to you by me, give that Piṇḍa at Gayā-śīrṣa when he dies. O Janārdana, Obeisance to you. Salutation to you in the form of Pitṛs.

66. Hail to you O Pitṛpātra (one who deserves to be worshipped by the Pitṛs). Obeisance to you, the cause of salvation.

*Reading *Dakṣeṇa* for *Mantreṇa*.

1. For offering *Piṇḍa* to oneself cf. *Vāyu* 108.85, also AP. 115.68.

At Gayā, Janārdana is himself present in the form of the Pitṛs.

67a. By seeing the lotus-eyed lord (Puṇḍarīkākṣa) one is liberated from the threefold indebtedness. "O Puṇḍarīkākṣa, I bow to you, O liberator from the threefold indebtedness, O lord of Lakṣmī, obeisance be to you. Hail to you O bestower of salvation on the Pitṛs."

By worshipping Puṇḍarīkākṣa Janārdana the devotee shall attain heaven.

69. Kneeling on the ground with the left knee bent, the devotee shall bow down to Janārdana. After performing the Śrāddha along with the Piṇḍas the devotee shall attain the world of Viṣṇu along with his brothers.

70. On the left leg of the rocky slab (śilā) is the mountain Pretakūṭa. It is held by Dharmarāja. The mountain consisting of Pretaśilā is sinful.

71. It was cast off very far by means of the leg (by Gadādhara) since the weight of the rocky slab had been felt on the Pāda (foot). The departed jīvas catch hold of (the deities) in the form of archers.

72. Many of them cause obstacles and they are stationed, separately. For the liberation of the Pitṛs the performance of Śrāddha etc. in the Tīrtha is a contributory cause.

73. The Pretakūṭa attained sanctity, thanks to the contact with the Śilādri (the hill called Śilā). The Pretakuṇḍa is also there. The Devas are stationed there by means of their Pādas (footprints).

74-76a He who takes bath and offers Śrāddha and Piṇḍas shall liberate Pitṛs from ghosthood. In the land of Kīkaṭas (Magadha), Gayā is highly sacred, the forest of Rājagṛha is sacred and meritorious, the hermitage of Cyavana is sanctifier, the river called Punapunā (mod. Punpun, a tributary of the Gaṅgā in Patna District) is highly sacred. Vaikuṇṭha, Lohadaṇḍa, Girikūṭa and Śoṇaga are holy centres. He who performs Śrāddha and offers Piṇḍas there, shall lead Pitṛs to the city of Brahmā.

76b-77. On the southern foot of the "rocky slab (śilā)", the mountain Gṛdhrakūṭa is held by Dharmarāja. In order to stabilise themselves immediately, the great holy sages assumed

the forms of vultures, performed penances and achieved siddhis.

78. Hence the mountain is called Gṛdhṛakūṭa,[1] the lord of vultures. There is Śiva. By taking holy bath and visiting Gṛdhreśvara, the man goes to the city of Śambhu.

79. After going to the city of Grdhras, one whose opportune moment has arrived, shall go to the heaven. By visiting Śiva (in the holy centres of) Ṛṇamoksa (that which liberates from indebtedness) and Pāpamokṣa (that which liberates from sins), the devotee shall attain Śivahood.

80. The śilodaka (the spring-water from the rocky slab) is pervaded by the Ādipāda (portion) of the mountain. It is there that vighneśa (the destroyer of obstacles) is stationed in the form of an elephant.

81. By visiting him one is liberated from obstacles. The devotee shall take Pitṛs to the city of Śiva. By visiting Gāyatrī and Gayāditya after the holy dip, the devotee shall attain heaven.

82. By visiting Brahmā stationed at the Ādipāda, the devotee shall redeem the Pitṛs. He who offers the Piṇḍas at the Navel shall lead Pitṛs to the city of Brahmā.

83. An excellent lotus rose up for beautifying the Muṇḍapṛṣṭha hill. By visiting the Muṇḍapṛṣṭha and the lotus, the devotee is liberated from sins.

84. (Defective) the devotee shall avoid from a pretty long distance the horned animals, fanged animals, serpents, poisons, fires, women and water. He who sports with them is no better than a dead person.

85-90. The following are proclaimed as Patitas (fallen ones) Viz : He who is killed while offending the serpents; he who is struck down by lightning; he who is captured and

1. Near Gayā there is a chain of sacred but rocky hills and their peaks are called Bhasma-Kūṭa, Gṛdhra-Kūṭa, Preta-Kūṭa, Nāga-Kūṭa, Rāma Śilā, Preta Śilā, Krauñca-Pāda.

Gayāśirṣa consists of this chain of hillocks extending to about two miles. But this spot was well-known even before the time of the Buddha as we find the record of Buddha's visit to Gayāśirṣa (Pāli for Gayā Śiṛa) in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, Vol. IV. P. 302.

punished by the king himself due to the fault of thieving; those who indulge in sexual dalliance with other men's wives and are killed by their husbands out of hatred; those who are killed after coming into conflict with Cāṇḍālas and others; those who are of unequal rank and of mixed caste; those who depend upon Cāṇḍālas and others; those who poison and burn cows; heretics of ruthless intellect; those base men who commit suicide out of anger with fasts into death, poisoning, burning, inflicting wounds with weapons, hanging themselves, drowning themselves in water; and falling from the tops of mountains and tall trees; those who maintain themselves through reproachful ingenuity; those who are authorized in the Pañcasūnās i.e. five household things namely, oven, grinding stone, broomstick, wooden mortar and water pots; those who are almost dejected in sacrifices and assemblies; the eunuchs; those who are struck down by the imprecations of the Brāhmaṇas; those who are killed by Brāhmaṇas and those who are guilty of great sins.

91. All these fallen ones attain purity, thanks to the Bhasman of Gayākūpa. Thus, O gentle lady, the excellent greatness of Gayā has been recounted to you.

92-94. This is destructive of all sins; it bestows liberation on the Pitṛs. The man, who devoutly listens to this during Śrāddha or on Parvan days or daily, O fair lady, the man who recounts this, shall attain the world of Brahmā. This is the source of welfare; this is holy; this is conducive to wealth; this bestows attainment of heaven on men; it is conducive to renown and longevity; it increases sons and grandsons.

CHAPTER FORTYEIGHT

The Greatness of Kāśi

Māndhātā Said :

1-4. "O holy sir, the meritorious life of Mohinī, that is destructive of great sins has been splendidly recounted by you who are omniscient and merciful. At the instance of her father, Mohinī had caused the release of her husband, son and co-wife from the ocean of worldly existence, after insisting too much on protection to Dharma. That daughter of Brahmā was omniscient and engaged in the welfare of all the worlds. She sought refuge in her priest. After listening to the greatness of Gayā, the bestower of salvation on the Pitṛs what did she once again ask that Brāhmaṇa Vasu, the most excellent among the knowers of the Vedas."

Vasiṣṭha replied :

5. "Listen O king, I shall recount what Mohinī who had been deluded and who was desirous of resorting to the holy places, asked Vasu once again".

Mohinī submitted :

6-10. "Well done, well done, O excellent Brāhmaṇa, interested in uplifting the worlds. Now I have been blessed by you of merciful soul. O Brāhmaṇa, the excellent greatness of Gayā, which is a great secret which is a pleasing narrative of Dharma, which bestows salvation on the Pitṛs and which is meritorious, has been heard by me. Now O leading Brāhmaṇa, narrate the excellent greatness of Kāśī.

8-10. O Brāhmaṇa, a little of it had been formerly heard by me when orally repeated by Sandhyāvalī. Hence, it is being recollected by me. Now, tell it to me in detail.

Vasiṣṭha said :

On hearing those words of Mohinī, Vasu, her priest, who knew the reality of the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas spoke to her again.

Vasu said :

May it be heard. The city of Kāśī is blessed and auspicious. Lord Maheśvara is blessed.

11-12. To him who continuously resorts to Kāśī, it is the bestower of salvation. It was a city pertaining to Viṣṇu. The eternal lord Śiva requested for it from Hari. He remained there worshipping Hṛṣīkeśa and he was worshipped by Devas and others.

13. Varanasi is a beautiful city. It is the essence of the three worlds. On being resorted to it, it is the bestower of good goal (salvation) on men. Persons who have resorted to this city, even though they might have committed various sins, become free from all blemishes and shine like gods.

14. This holy centre is a mystically secret place. It is conducive to happiness to all living beings. It is the bestower of salvation on all creatures. It is pertaining to both Viṣṇu and Śiva.

15. He may be a Brāhmaṇa-slayer, a killer of cows, a defiler of his preceptor's bed or a betrayer of friends. He may be guilty of misappropriation of deposits on trust or he might have practised usury or adopted the basest form of maintenance—the man who approaches Varanasi, the city of Śiva, shall have his self liberated from the strong bondage of worldly existence.

16. Having reached this sacred place, frequented by gods and Siddhas, thanks to the power of his merit, the man shall be well-known amongst Devas and Asuras. When dead he may attain Mokṣa, the highest region.

17. Those meritorious persons who stay in this holy centre, are the devotees of either Hara or Hari and visit the deity every day with great respect, are as pure and saintly as Śambhu and whose activities and holy rites are very pure become free from fear, sorrow and sins. After cutting asunder the thick net of birth in Saṁsāra they obtain great liberation.

18. This Kāśī kṣetra extends to two and a half Yojanas (1 yojana = 3 km) from east to west and half a Yojana from North to South.

19. From the river Varanā (Mod. Barnā) (the north) to the river Asī of dry bed (to the south), is spoken of as the area of this holy place, by god Śiva.[1]

20. The Liṅga that is known as Timi Caṇḍeśvara is the northern limit (or entrance of this kṣetra). The southern end is Śaṅkukarṇa based on Oṁkāra.

21. It is described that there is a sacred pool called Piṅgalā in the south-east corner of this sacred place. The dry river Asi is to be known as the Piṅgalā Nāḍī near which stands Lolārka.

22. The mystic vein called Iḍā is described as being related to the moon and hence pleasing and auspicious. It should be known as the (river) Varaṇā—the place where Viṣṇu is stationed.

23-24. The mystic vein that is in between the two mystic veins is glorified as Suṣumnā which should be known to be the Gaṅgā (the container of fish in her belly or stream).[2] This great holy centre is traditionally known as Avimuktaka[3] as this has never been abandoned nor shall ever be given up (by Lord Śiva or Viṣṇu). Hence it is called quiet, soundless (visvara).*

25. O auspicious lady, in this holy centre the attainment of liberation is possible without any strain, more easily than in such holy centres as Prayāga which is very difficult of access.

26-28a. There are people of various castes; there are Cāṇḍālas of despicable character; there are persons whose

1. Cf. Mt. P. 184. 50-52 also *Liṅga. Śuṣka-Nadī* in the NP (for *Śukla* in Mt. P.) is correct, as the Asi is practically a dry stream.

2. The Sk. P. -Kāśi. 5.25 attaches the same Yogic significance to the Varaṇā and the Asi, but Avimukta is *Suṣumnā*, the *Liṅga P.* quoted in the *Tīrtha-Cintāmaṇi*, p. 341 repeats these NP. verses.

3. Avimukta proper is the area lying in the circle with the old temple of Viśveśvara as the centre and with 200 *dhanus* (= 800 cubits or about 1200 feet) as the radius. But later on, it was extended to cover the whole of Kāśi—

avimuktam mahākṣetram pañca-Krośa-parimitam —SK P.I V. i 26.31.

even though elsewhere the SK. P. (74. 45-46) gives the following limits : West-Gokarṇeśa, East-Maṇikarṇīśa, South—Brahmeśa and North—Bhārabhūta.

*VV. 21-23 are found *verbatim* in the *Liṅga P.* (as quoted in the *Tīrtha-cintāmaṇi*, p. 341) but the reading for *visvara* is *viṣuva*.

entire person is filled with sins and great evils. Learned men know that Avimukta is a great medicine for them. Hara takes pity on wicked persons, blind ones, indigent ones, miserable ones and those who commit sins. He leads them on to great salvation.

28b-30a. O auspicious-looking lady, that city becomes holy and meritorious ever since the Gaṅgā began to flow through the middle of the holy centre and then joined the ocean. The Gaṅgā flows through towards the North. The Sarasvatī flows towards the East.

30b-31a. The skull was left off there by Śiva of great and noble soul. The worlds attained by those people who go to that holy centre and propitiate the Pitṛs by means of Piṇḍa-offerings in the Śrāddhas, are refulgent ones.

31b-32a. If the murderer of a Brāhmaṇa goes to Avimukta at any time, the Brahmahatyā (the sin of Brahmin-slaughter) recedes due to the greatness of that holy centre.[1]

32b-33a. Those men of great merits who go to Avimukta become everlasting, free from old age and attain salvation and liberation from bodily bondage.

33b-34. If a man or a woman, knowingly or unknowingly commits some inauspicious act through evil intellect, all that is reduced to ashes (the moment) he enters Avimukta.[2]

35. A man staying in Avimukta is like a man who performs sacrifices continuously, who makes charitable gifts always and who continuously performs penance.

36. The salvation attained by the residents of Avimukta cannot be attained by residing at Kurukṣetra, Gaṅgādvāra or in Puṣkara.

37. There is no doubt in this matter that all the living beings have the benefit of truthfulness and penance by all means. But he who stays in Avimukta is Maheśvara himself.

38. Those foolish men of murky mind who do not resort to Avimukta, stay again and again in the midst of faeces, urine and menstrual blood (i.e. they are born of wombs, frequently.)

1. Mbh. *Vana*—84. 79-80; Pd. P. V-14.191.
2. Mt. P. 181. 17-21.

39. Even those persons of evil actions who come into contact with the dust particles which were lying in Avimukta, and were wafted by the wind towards them attain the greatest goal.

40. The man who stays there, who has controlled his mind and who has great concentration is remembered as equal to an ascetic feeding himself on wind although he may be enjoying all the three worlds.

41. He who stays there for a month, who takes food regularly, but who has controlled his sense-organs is like a person by whom the holy vow of the great Pāśupata Vrata has been performed.

42. He conquers the fear of birth and death; he attains the greatest goal; viz. Mokṣa, he obtains holy salvation and he attains the Yogic goal.

43. Indeed, the Yogic goal cannot be attained by ordinary persons even in hundreds of births. But it is attained here, thanks to the greatness of the holy centre and the superhuman power of Śaṅkara.

44. If a man stays there for a month taking only a single meal a day, O fair-faced lady, his sins committed throughout his life perish in a month.

45. The man who is endowed with the Vow of celibacy and who does not abandon Avimukta until the fall of the body (i.e. death) shall become Śaṅkara himself.

46. If anyone does not abandon Avimukta though overwhelmed by obstacles, he transcends old age and death as well as this transient life.

47. Those who resort to Avimukta till the fall of their bodies, go to divine worlds by means of swan-yoked vehicles after death.

48. A man's mind may be attracted towards worldly pleasures; he may have eschewed devotion and he may be unthinking. But if he dies in this holy centre, he does not re-enter the worldly existence.[1]

49. On this earth, this excellent holy centre is the cause for the attainment of heavenly pleasures as well as salvation.

1. Mt. P. 180.71; Liṅga I. 92.63, Sk. P. IV. 86.122.

There is no doubt about this that he who dies therein, obtains salvation.

50. The great salvation, the region that a Yogin attains in the course of a thousand births, one attains by merely dying here itself.[1]

51-52. Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, Śūdras, persons of mixed castes, worms, outcastes alien tribes, persons of sinful birth and of intercaste origin, germs, insects, ants and all kinds of animals and birds who die here in due course of time (at the hands of Kāla) are remembered as lords of gods.

53-54a. They will attain identity of form with Rudra viz. all of them will have crests of crescent, eyes in the forehead and emblems of bull. O auspicious lady, those who cast off their vital airs there, in fact, attain Rudrahood. They rejoice in the vicinity of Śiva.

54b-55a. Whether willingly or unwillingly if one abandons one's life at Avimukta, one shall undoubtedly attain liberation. This is true in the case of even animals.

55b-56a. Those men who had ever been devotees of Śiva exclusively and not of others, those whose minds and vital airs adhere to him (lord Śiva), do become living liberated souls. There is no doubt about it.

56b-57a. O Mohinī, those who enter funeral pyre deliberately, in the holy centre of Avimukta attain complete identity with Rudra, the destructive fire at the end of the world.

57b-58a. There is no return to worldly existence even in hundreds and crores of Kalpas, in the case of those devotees of Śiva who observe fast unto death with a steady resolve.

58b-59a. At the time of death in Avimukta, the lord of all beings himself offers the prayerful word for repetition into the ears of living beings who are urged by their Karmans.

59b-61a. It has been mentioned thus by Rāma himself with great pleasure in his mind to Śiva who performs auspicious things and who resides in Avimukta : — O Śiva, if you yourself instruct my Mantra into the right ear of a dying person whoever he may be, he will become liberated.

1. Mt. P. 180.74; Liṅga I. 92.66.

61b-63. At the time of death when the Karmans of men are being split and when they are being urged by the wind, they lose all memory. The Rudras who are stationed in Avimukta viz. Ḍimicaṇḍeśvara and others are the bestowers of pleasures on devotees. They give the Tāraka Mantra (by whispering it) into the ears. No sinner dying in Avimukta goes to the hell.[1]

64. All persons blessed by Īśvara do attain great salvation. Here the attributes of Avimukta were recounted to you only by way of illustration.

65-66. The detailed explanation of the attributes of Avimukta is like that of the jewels in the ocean. The intellect of the dead, on being led to the heaven, is the same as that of those established in perfect knowledge and wisdom and those who wish for the greatest bliss. A man who abandons his vital airs here, is never born anywhere.

67. That endless salvation of that deity is like that of the Yogins. What is called Śmaśāna[2] (cremation ground) is the pedestal of Yoga and the Tīrtha thereof is Maṇikarṇikā.

68-69a. Liberation is indicated in those places by means of their Karmans in the case of fallen men. In this connection Manikarṇikā[3] is the most excellent of all Tīrthas, since O fair lady, there is perpetual presence of Dhūrjaṭi (Śiva).

1. Sk. P. IV. 32.115-116. The belief still prevails and persons who can afford to do so come to Varanasi in the last stage of their life.

2. *Śmaśāna* or *Mahā-śmaśāna* is another name of this holy centre. Cf. Sk. P. *Kāśī* 30. 111. Pd, P. 1. 33.14; Mt. P. 184.19. The Sk. P. (IV. 30. 103-104) explains that at the end of the world all *bhūtas* or elements (*Śma*) lie down here like corpses. Hence it is called *Śmaśāna or Mahā-Śmaśāna.*

3. Maṇikarṇikā is the sacred-most pool (*Tīrtha*) out of the five important (*Tīrthas*) (*Pañca-Tīrthī*) in Varanasi (Mt. P. 185. 68-69). Its north-south length is 105 *hastas* i.e. about 160 feet (Sk. P. IV. 99.54). Two popular etymologies of Maṇikarṇikā are recorded in the Sk. P. : (1) A jewel (*Maṇi*) among *muktikṣetras* forms the pericarp (*Karṇikā*) of the lotus-like feet of Mokṣa-Lakṣmī. (ii) God Śiva is the wish-bestowing jewel (*Maṇi*) who whispers in the ear (*Karṇikā*) of dying man the *Tāraka Mantra* (Sk. P. IV. 7.79-80).

69b-70a. O fair-faced lady, by taking his bath there, the righteous soul attains that fruit which ten horse sacrifices are remembered to yield.

70b-71a. He who gives away all his wealth to a Brāhmaṇa who has mastered the Vedas, like the Homa-offerings into the blazing fire attains splendid goal.

71b-72a. The man who observes fast and propitiates Brāhmaṇas decidedly attains the benefit of Sautrāmaṇiyajña (the sacrifice pertaining to Indra).

72b-73a. By offering lights, the sense-organs throb with knowledge. By offering incense, he attains that place resorted to by Rudras.

73b-74. He who marks a young gentle bull and sets it free along with four heifers, attains the greatest goal. Undoubtedly he derives liberation along with his ancestors.

75. Of what avail is much talk ? Infinite benefit accrues to one who performs Dharma etc., with Śiva in view.

76. The merit of ten horse-sacrifices is glorified to accrue to one on giving flowers. In giving incense one gets the benefit of Agnihotra; in giving scents, the benefit is that of making charitable gifts of plots of land.

77. In Mārjana (wiping off) the benefit glorified is that one gets by gifting away a cow; ten times the usual benefit accrues to one who offers unguents. While in offering garlands the benefit is ten-times that of the usual.

78-79a. In (offering vocal) music the benefit is a thousand-fold; in instrumental music the benefit is hundred-thousand fold.

Those who worship and eulogise Mahādeva at Avimukta are liberated from all sins, freed from old age and death. They stand in the heaven.

79b-80. If on reaching Avimukta a man worships the Liṅga, he has no rebirth even in hundreds and crores of Kalpas. Unaging and devoid of death he sports in the presence of Śiva.

81-82a. The liberated souls who perform the Japa of Śatarudrīya with great concentration along with requisite meditation and after restraining the groups of sense-organs,

the excellent Brāhmaṇas who are stationed in Avimukta continuously are blessed and have their objects achieved.

82b-83. O famous lady, he who observes fast for a single day undoubtedly derives the benefit of observing fast for a hundred years. Henceforth the identity arising from the confluence of Gaṅgā and Varuṇā.

84. When the twelfth day of the month of Śrāvaṇa coincides with a Wednesday a man should take a holy bath therein. By his mere presence he derives the benefit.

85. He who performs Śrāddha rites at that time and place, O fair faced lady, redeems the Pitṛs and goes to Viṣṇu's world.

86. By giving a horse as gift in accordance with the injunctions, in the world-famous confluence of the Gaṅgā with Varaṇā and Asi,[1] the devotee is not born again (i.e. he gets Mokṣa).

87 The devout man who worships the lord of the Saṅgama (confluence) there, is the Lord of the chiefs of Devas himself. He is competent to restrain and bless.

88. Keśava[2] himself stands to the east of the lord of the Devas. To the east of Keśava is the well-known Saṅgameśvara.

1. This is a bit confusing statement. The confluence of the Varaṇā and the Gaṅgā and that of the Asī with Gangā are two different holy spots in the famous *Pañca-Tīrthī* of Varanasi. The temple of Lolārka is near the confluence of the Gaṅgā and the Asī.

2. Mt. P. (185. 68-69) regards this Keśava or Ādikeśava of the Sk. P. and the inscriptions of Gahadwal ruler of Kanauj (as in E. I. XIV. 197-198) as one of the holiest shrines. It is near the confluence of the Gaṅgā and Varaṇā. Saṅgameśvara mentioned in this verse is near Ādi-Keśava shrine.

CHAPTER FORTYNINE

Pilgrimage to Kāśi[1]

Vasu said :

1. O beautiful lady, to the north east of that seat of the deity (Saṅgameśvara), four-faced Liṅga had been installed by Sagara.

2. In the north-west corner of the holy centre pertaining to Sagara is the lake Bhadradeha made out of the milk of cows. It is destructive of all sins.

3. O Mohinī, merely by taking bath therein, a man attains the benefit of charitable gift of a thousand Tawny-coloured cows.

4. The period when the constellation Pūrvābhādrapadā coincides with the full moon day, is highly meritorious and it yields the benefit of a horse-sacrifice.

5. The goddess who is seen in the cremation ground is well known as Bhīṣma Caṇḍikā. By worshipping her, a man never faces a mishap.

6. Krttivāseśvara[1] is to the East of Antakeśvara, to the South of Sarveśvara and to the north of Mātalīśvara.

7-8a. O gentle lady, by visiting Kṛttivāseśvara and by worshipping him, one attains the greatest goal even in a single birth. This is derived in Kṛttivāsa. Usually the sin committed in the previous birth is not dispelled even by penance. But by visiting that Liṅga (i.e. Kṛttivāsa) that sin perishes instantaneously.

8b-9. In the Kṛtayuga, the Tryambaka Liṅga is to be worshipped, in the Tretāyuga the liṅga of Kṛttivāsas is to be worshipped. It is the Maheśvara Liṅga that is sung about in the Dvāpara. The Liṅga Hastipāleśvara is sung about in the Kali age by the Siddhas.

10. If one desires to get eternal knowledge that absolves one from Saṁsāra and grants immortality one should visit the

1. This chapter describes some of the important holy spots in Varanasi.

god Kṛttivāseśvara[1] again and again.

11. By seeing the lord of the Devas even a murderer of a Brāhmaṇa is liberated from the sin. By touching and worshipping the Liṅga one derives the benefit of all Yajñas.

12-16a. On the fourteenth day in the dark half of the month of Phālguna, the devotees should worship the eternal lord with great faith and concentration by means of flowers, fruits, leaves and diverse kinds of foodstuffs as well as by means of milk, honey, water and ghee. They propitiate and worship the auspicious Liṅga by means of the sound of small hand-drums (Ḍamarus) bowing, dancing, singing, playing on mouth organs, recitation of Stotras (hymns) and chanting Mantras. After observing fast for one night and worshipping lord Śiva with deep devotion, they attain the supreme region, O Mohinī.

16b-17. He who worships Parameśvara on the fourteenth day in the month of Vaiśākha,[2] attains the world of Vaiśākha (lord Kārttikeya) and becomes his follower.

18-19a. He who worships Hara faithfully in the month Jyeṣṭha on the fourteenth day, attains the heavenly world and remains there until the time of dissolution of all living beings.

19b-20a. O gentle lady, he who worships Śiva with purity on the fourteenth day in the month of Āṣāḍha attains the world of the sun and sports himself about as much as he pleases.

20b-21a. By worshipping Yogin Śaṅkara in the month of Bhādrapada with various flowers and fruits the devotee attains the same world as that of Indra.

21b-23a. By worshipping Īśvara on the fourteenth day in the Pitṛpakṣa (dark half of the Bhādrapada month) the devotee attains the world of the Pitṛs and being honoured by them he sports about.

23b-24a. By worshipping Maheśvara, the lord of the Devas, in the month of Prabodha (i.e. Kārttika), the devotee

1. VV. 6-10 describe the glory of Kṛttivāseśvara. It was in the Hara-Tīrtha lane. It was destroyed by Aurangzeb and a masjid was constructed on its site where the site of original Kṛttivāsa Liṅga can be located. Now a new shrine for Kṛttivāseśvara is built near the Mosque (The *Kalyāṇa* XXX-I *Tīrthāṅka*, p. 133).

2. VV. 16b-27 describe the various Yātrās to be performed in various months.

attains the world of the moon and sports about as long as he pleases.

24b-25a. By worshipping the Pināka-bearing lord in the dark half of the month of Mārgaśīrṣa, the devotee attains the world of Viṣṇu and sports about there for endless Ages (time).

25b-26a. By worshipping Sthāṇu in the month of Pauṣa with a dilighted mind the devotee attains the spot pertaining to Nirṛti and rejoices alongwith him.

26b-27a. By worshipping Śiva with auspicious flowers, fruits and roots in the month of Māgha, the devotee eschews the ocean of worldly existence and attains Śivaloka.

27b-29. If one wishes for attaining the region of Śaṅkara, one should reside in Avimukta and assiduously worship lord Kṛttivāseśvara. Towards the west of Vyāseśa, there is the deep pool called Ghaṇṭākarṇa. By taking bath in that pool and by visiting Vyāseśa, O gentle lady, wherever one may die one shall have the benefit of dying in Varanasi.

30. If the man takes a holy bath in Daṇḍakhāta and performs Tarpaṇa rite for his deceased ancestors O gentle lady, those who are detained in the hell go to the world of Pitṛs.

31. The uplift of those men of evil deeds who have attained Piśāca-hood (the state of an evil spirit), O gentle lady, is through the offerings of Piṇḍas.

32-33. By seeing that pond, one has his objects achieved: Goddess Lalitā stays there and she bestows happiness on the people. Those who stay in that spot and worship her are given various pleasures by her, O bestower of honour.

34. O Mohinī, she confers the imperishable worlds upon those persons who keep awake with lamps in front of her.

35. Those who erect temples for her, those who sweep the ground thereof shall have the charitable gift of eight thousand gold pieces.

36. Listen to the meritorious benefit of the person, who, O gentle lady, feeds those Brāhmaṇas who are masters of the Vedas, with sweet cooked rice for the sake of the deity.

37. Whether the devotee is a man or a woman, he will be blessed with all worldly pleasures. He will reside in the

world of Durgā for the period of a Kalpa and thereafter he will come here again.

38. The couples will be endowed with plenty of wealth and food grains. They will be born in the family of great persons. They will be fortunate, comely in features and proud, thanks to their beauty and youth.

39-40a. O gentle lady, they will be like this :— They will be the object of all pleasures. Whence is the fear of rebirth to that person who, after attaining the rare human birth as fickle as the fall of lightning, visits Lalitā ?

40b-41a. By seeing Lalitā at Vārāṇasī, the man attains the same benefit as one derives after circumambulating the earth.

41b-42. The devotee should observe fast on the fourth day in every month. He should then worship that goddess and keep awake during the night. O gentle lady, he gains prosperity of the three worlds.

43. O Mohinī, after worshipping the praiseworthy Nalakūbarakeśāna who is the bestower of all Siddhis, the man shall have all his objects accomplished.

44. O gentle lady, to the south of it is the holy centre Maṇikarṇī. There is a great Tīrtha in front of it. It is destructive of sins.

45. By seeing lord Maṇikarṇīśvara[1] abiding in the Kuṇḍa (the holy pool), by bowing down and then by worshipping him, one shall cease to stay in a belly once again (i.e. one is liberated from Saṁsāra).

46. By worshipping the great Gaṅgeśvara who is installed in the Gaṅgā to his southern side, the devotee shall attain the world of gods (Svarga).

47. O Mohinī, I shall describe another shrine at Varanasi. The beautiful spot dear to the lord of the Devas is there.

48. Once, O blessed lady, the Liṅga of the moon-crested lord was being taken away by Rākṣasas who were moving speedily through the sky.[2]

1. *Vide* note 3 on p. 1830

2. VV. 47-56 describe the Liṅga known as Kukkuṭeśvara. The sage's is an attempt to give a popular etymology of the name.

49. When they reached this place, the lord thought—"How will it be possible for me to avoid being separated from the spot of Avimukta ?"

50. O auspicious lady, even as the lord of the Devas was thinking about this, a cock crew there. (There arose the crowing sound of a cock.)

51. O gentle lady, on hearing that sound, the Rākṣasas became mentally afraid. They abandoned the Liṅga there itself, at the time of the early dawn, and fled away.

52-53. When the Rākṣasas ran away thus, the Liṅga remained lying there in an extremely beautiful spot. O beautiful lady, the lord of the Devas himself reappeared in the middle of Avimukta. Hence the place is known to be superior to (other places).

54. Then the name Hara was remembered by the Devas as Avimukta consisting of the most sacred syllables. Avimukta is the bestower of salvation on mobile and immobile beings, particularly on those living beings who die there.

55. O blessed lady, cocks had always been there in that holy spot. Even today they are seen there being worshipped by auspicious souls.

56. O gentle lady, the man who always resorts to it and observes it with his eyes is not reborn even in the course of hundreds and crores of Kalpas.

57. To the south of the lord, there is a splendid tank. If one drinks its water there is no return to the world here.

58-59a. There are three Liṅgas in the hearts of man. Those men by whom the waters of that pool are drunk get their desires accomplished. There is no doubt about this that these persons possess perfect knowledge which redeems them.

59b-60a. By taking bath in the waters of the tank, by seeing the deity named Daṇḍaka and by visiting Avimukta thereafter, one attains Kaivalya (salvation) instantaneously.

60b-61a. If a Brāhmaṇa performs the Sandhyā rites there even once, it is as good as performing the Sandhyā rites for sixtyfive years.

61b-62a. By visiting the city of Varanasi (also known as) the cremation ground (Śmaśāna) Avimuktaka, and the lord of Avimukta one becomes the lord of the Gaṇas.

62b-63a. By seeing the Liṅga Avimukteśvara,[1] the man is immediately liberated from sins, ailments and bondages with which jīvas are fettered.*

63b-64. In front of Avimukta, there is a Liṅga statjoned there facing the West. O gentle lady, it is called Lakṣaṇeśvara. If a man sees Avimukta and Lakṣaṇeśvara he immediately becomes one possessing perfect spiritual knowledge.

65. To the north of it, O gentle lady, there is a fourfaced Liṅga. It is named Caturtheśvara. It is excessively destructive of sins and fears.

66. To all living beings in the world the holy centre Varanasī is the bestower of salvation. But the Liṅga Avimukteśvara there is glorified as Jīvanmukta (i.e. which bestows upon devotees liberation even while they are alive).

67. If a man stays anywhere there, the lordship of Gaṇas is ordained in respect of him. By abandoning the vital breaths there, one shall attain the ultimate salvation.

68. The first Āvaraṇa (enclosure) is remembered to be the area within the above limits. In the second Āvaraṇa (enclosure) the Maṇikarṇikā is to the east.

69. There are seven crores of Liṅgas abiding in that spot. Merely by seeing them one shall attain the benefit of (performing) Yajñas.

70. These are Siddha (self-manifested ?) Liṅgas. (In Kāśi) all wells, tanks, ponds, rivers and pools—all of them are glorified as sacred.

71. A person who will take bath in these with concentrated mind and touch the Liṅgas (while bowing, worshipping etc.) will never re-enter Saṁsāra again.

72. All the important holy centres that are on the Earth and in the firmament have been recounted to yon by me.

73. O fair lady, the pilgrimage to the holy centres, that is destructive of sins, has been described by me. He who

1. VV. 61b-66 glorify Avimukteśvara which a Liṅga in Avimukta-Kṣetra for which *vide* note 3 on p. 1826 above.

*According to the *Pāśupata darśana*, the five *Pāśas* with bind *jīvas* are the products of *Mala*, *Karman*, *Māyā*, *tirodhānaśakti* and *bindu*.

undertakes the pilgrimage and he who sees him attains salvation.

74. O lady of beautiful hips, Avimukta is the splendid middle Āvaraṇa (enclosure). This is named Kaṇṭaka too. At the time of death it is the bestower of final liberation from saṁsāra.

CHAPTER FIFTY

The Glory of Kāśī

Vasu Said :—

1. Henceforth, O Mohinī, I shall recount the proper time for the Yātrā (pilgrimage) which has been undertaken by the Devas and others[1] and which yields befitting benefits.

2. Formerly, in the month of Caitra, this pilgrimage was performed by the heaven-born gods staying there at Kāmakuṇḍa. They were exclusively and devotedly engaged in performing ablutions and worship.

3. In the month of Jyeṣṭha, O splendid-faced lady, the pilgrimage was undertaken by the Siddhas devotedly engaged in the performance of religious bath and worship in the Rudravāsa Kuṇḍa (pool) which was the residence of Rudra.

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1. VV. 1-10 enumerate the month and holy centres visited by gods and others for pilgrimage.

	Category of The Pilgrim	*Month of Pilgrimage*	*Holy spot (Kuṇḍa) visited etc.*
1.	Gods	Caitra	Kāma Kuṇḍa
2.	Siddhas	Jyeṣṭha	Rudra-Vāsa Kuṇḍa
3.	Gandharvas	Āṣāḍha	Priyā-devī Kuṇḍa
4.	Vidyādharas	Śrāvaṇa	Lakṣmī Kuṇḍa
5.	Yakṣas	Āśvina	Mārkaṇḍeya Kuṇḍa
6.	Pannagas	Mārgaśīrṣa	Koṭi-Tīrtha
7.	Guhyakas	Pauṣa	Kapāla-mocana Kuṇḍa
8.	Piśācas	Phālguna	Kāleśvara Kuṇḍa.

4. In the month of Āṣāḍha, the pilgrimage was carried out by the auspicious Gandharvas who performed their ablution and worship in the Kuṇḍa of goddess Priyādevī.

5. O Mohinī, in the month of Śrāvaṇa this pilgrimage was performed by the Vidyādharas who stayed near Lakṣmī-Kuṇḍa and who were devoutly engaged in the performance of ablution therein and the worship of the deity.

6. O fair-faced lady, in the month of Āśvina this pilgrimage was undertaken by Yakṣas who, stationed at the deep pool of Mārkaṇḍeya were engaged in the worship and ablution therein.

7. O Mohinī, in the month of Mārgaśīrṣa, this pilgrimage was performed by the Pannagas (serpents) who stayed at the Koṭitīrthas and performed ablutions and worship.

8. O splendid-eyed lady, in the month of Pauṣa this pilgrimage was undertaken by the Guhyakas stationed at Kapālamocana (kuṇḍa) and were engaged in the regular practice of ablution, meditation and worship.

9. O splendid lady, in the month of Phālguna this pilgrimage was undertaken by the Piśācas stationed at the Kuṇḍa (pool) Kāleśvara who were devoutly engaged in ablution, worship etc.

10. Hence, O gentle lady it is well-known that the fourteenth day in the bright half of the auspicious month of Phālguna is called "Piśācī (Caturdaśī)".

11. Henceforth, O splendid-faced lady, I shall tell you the duties and procedure in respect of the pilgrimage, by performing which the man shall attain the full benefit of pilgrimage.

12. Waterpots should be given as gifts accompanied with sweet-cooked rice. They should be beautiful and be covered with cloths and be presented alongwith fruits and flowers.

13. The third day in the bright half of the month of Caitra is highly fruitful. On that day, Gaurī must be visited by men with devotional feelings.

14. O fair-faced lady, after taking bath the devotee should go to the holy centre Goprekṣa. At Svargadvāra (heavenly portals) Kālikādevī should be assiduously worshipped.

15. Another deity is also mentioned to be very great. She is Saṁvartā, the auspicious Lalitā. She should be visited with devotion. She is the bestower of all desired benefit.

16. Thereafter, he (the pilgrim) should feed Brāhmaṇa devotees of Śiva who are observers of pure vows, and offer them clothes and sumptuous monetary gifts of befitting nature.

17. With Pañca-Gaurīs in view the devotee shall dedicate tasty juices and sweet scents to a Brāhmaṇa. He will obtain excellent and great welfare and be endowed with good fortune.

18. I shall now mention the Vināyakas, the creators of obstacles and troubles in the residence of holy centre Kāśī. O gentle lady, by worshipping them, a man attains benefit without any hindrance.

19-20. Having visited Ḍhunḍhi-Vināyaka first (one should next visit) Kīla-Vināyaka, Devī-Vināyaka, Go-prekṣya Vināyaka, Hasti-hasti-Vināyaka and lastly the famous Sindūrya Vināyaka. O queen, all these Vināyakas be visited on the Caturthī (fourth Lunar) day.[1]

21. With these (Vināyakas) in view, sweet-meats (sweet-balls) should be given to a Brāhmaṇa. When this duty is performed the man realises Siddhi (accomplishment of his desire)

22. Henceforth, I shall enumerate the Caṇḍikās[2] who protect the holy place (Kāśī). Durgā protects in the south; Antareśvarī protects in the south-west.

23-24. Aṅgāreśī protects in the west; Bhadrakālikā in the north-west; Bhīmacaṇḍā in the north; Mahāmattā in the north-east, Śāṅkarī accompanied by Ūrdhvakeśī in the east, Adhaḥkeśī in the south-east and Citraghaṇṭā in the middle.

1. Vināyakas were originally trouble-mongering spirits. They were to be propitiated at the beginning of any undertaking lest they should spoil the work. Their identification with god Gaṇeśa and attribution of auspicious nature to them is a later development in epics. It is reported that there were 56 Vināyakas at Varanasi. The most frequented is Ḍhuṇḍi-rāja Gaṇeśa to the west of Annapūrṇā temple.

2. Like Vināyakas, Caṇḍikās are the other category to be propitiated for one's protection, though their main job is to guard Varanasi. Their postings are enumerated in VV. 22-27.

25. These goddesses (Caṇḍikās) when visited by men become delighted with them. All of them eagerly protect the holy place.

26. O gentle lady, they continuously create obstacles for sinners. Hence, for the sake of protection, the goddesses should always be worshipped along with the Vināyakas.

27. If one wishes for the greatest Siddhi, progeny, prosperity and happiness, one must offer scents, fragrant flowers, Naivedyas etc. with devotion.

28. O lady of beautiful eyes, I shall recount to you another thing in that holy spot (city). There are three rivers flowing there with splendid waters.

29-31. Merely by seeing them the sin of the murder of a Brāhmaṇa recedes. The first of these is Trisrotā (the three-currented). The next one is Mandākinī and the third is Matsyodarī. These three bestow merits. Among them Mandākinī is highly meritorious. It is stationed in Madhyameśvara. Trisrotā that exceedingly bestows merit, flows in Avimukta; Matsyodarī is stationed at Oṁkāra; it is always the bestower of merit.

32. O Mohinī, the time when the Gaṅgā flows into that holy spot is extremely meritorious. It is difficult even to the Devas to get its advantage.

33. Will anybody bewail if he takes bath in the meritorious (holy centre) Nādeśvara sprinkled with the waters of Jāhnavī? (No).

34. O auspicious lady, Śiva got rid of the skull by bathing in it at a time when the Gaṅgā got mingled with the Matsyodarī.

35. The great lake named Kapālamocana is there itself. It is glorified as sanctifying of all living beings. It bestows merit on them.

36-37. The Gaṅgā gets mixed with the waters of the Matsyodarī near Oṁkāreśvara. If at that time a man takes bath in its waters and visits lord Oṁkāra, he is not contaminated by grief, old age and the bondage of death. One who takes bath therein himself becomes that deity, called Oṁkāreśvara.

38-39. O fair-faced lady, out of affection for you, this esoteric secret has been communicated to you.[1] The (constituents) there are Akāra (letter 'A') Ukāra (letter 'U') and Makāra (letter 'M'). The letter 'A' should be known as the bestower of the goal of Viṣṇu's world. The letter 'U' is reputed to be on its southern side.

40. Bṛhaspati the preceptor of the Devas attained great Siddhi there. Oṁkāra should be known as the unchanging region of Brahman.

41. To the north side of both of them is the letter 'M' termed as Viṣṇu's syllable. Sage Kapila, the great ascetic achieved Siddhi at that Liṅga.

42. After coming to Varanasi, Bhīṣma stayed there, worshipping the lord of the Devas, the excellent Pañcāyatana (five-aboded Śiva).

43. In that highly hallowed spot, Śiva manifested himself. He is well-known as Goprekṣaka. He is eulogised by all the deities.

44. After approaching, visiting and worshipping Goprekṣeśvara, a man never attains wretchedness. He is liberated from sins.

45. The cows staying in the forests and wandering about on being scorched by the forest-fire approached this deep pool of water and became calm. They drank water then.

46. Ever since then, this came to be called Kāpilāhrada (the Pool of Kapilā cows.) There also Śiva (who manifested himself) is as Vṛṣabha-dhvaja (bull-emblemed one).

47-49a. The lord always maintains his presence there and is always seen at that place. By taking bath in this holy Tīrtha of Kapilāhrada, and by visiting the bull-emblemed Śiva, the devotee of well-controlled mind shall attain the benefit of all the Yajñas. On dying there, he attains the heavenly world. By worshipping Śiva he becomes Śiva himself. With a different physical body, he attains Gaṇa-hood which is very difficult to attain.

49b-50. In this spot itself, cows were retained by Brahmā himself for peace in all the worlds and certainly to

1. This is an esoteric way of identifying the three *mātrās* of the sacred syllable *Oṁ* with the three rivers.

sanctify all. (It is from their milk that) the holy splendid lake Bhadradoha is created there. It is holy and destructive of sins.

51. A man who takes bath in that spot (Tīrtha) shall himself become the lord of speech. Śiva was brought there and installed by Parameṣṭhin (god Brahmā).

52. Collecting it from Brahmā, another Liṅga was installed by Viṣṇu. Śiva then remained there by the name Hiraṇyagarbha.

53. Thereafter, again, Brahmā installed a Liṅga which was named Svarlokeśvara (lord of heavenly world) which exhibited the divine heavenly sports at times.

54. By visiting that lord of the Devas, the devotee is honoured in Śiva's world. By abandoning the vital breath here, the devotee is not born again anywhere.

55-56. His state becomes eternal which is the same as in the case of Yogins. In this very same part of the earth, a certain Daitya, the thorn to the deities, had assumed the form of a tiger. This proud and strong Daitya was killed (by the lord), who became famous as Vyāghreśvara.[1] He abides here continuously.

57-58a. By visiting this lord of the immortals, the devotee never faces wretchedness. The Liṅga that is installed by the mountain Himālaya is stationed (and known as) Śaileśvara. O gentle lady, by visiting this no man will ever attain wretchedness.

58b-59. There were two Daityas Utpala and Vidala. As a result of the boon granted by Brahmā, they became arrogant. Seeing that they became indulgent to women out of lustfulness, Pārvatī killed them with bow and with a spear.* As a memento of it, this Liṅga has been established.

60. By visiting this Liṅga that has occupied the most

1. Purāṇa-writers are fond of giving popular etymologies *vide* our note on Kukkuṭeśvara.

*The text *Sāraṅgaṁ kantukenātra* is corrupt and obscure. It is emended *Śārṅgeṇa kuntakenātra* and translated as above.

important spot, no man is subjected to grief. O gentle lady, he becomes a Siddha in every one of his births.

61. All round it, Liṅgas were installed by the Devas. By visiting there a man shall become a Gaṇa with a different body assuming a new form after death.

62-63. This river Varanasi (combined name for Varaṇā and Asī) is sacred and destructive of sins. After embellishing this holy centre, it meets with the Jāhnavī. In this confluence, an excellent Liṅga was installed by Brahmā. It is wellknown in the whole universe as Saṅgameśvara. May it be seen.

64. Whence is the fear of a rebirth to that person who takes holy dip, O auspicious lady, in the confluence of the two divine rivers and worships god Saṅgameśvara (lord of the confluence).

65. O gentle lady, the Liṅga installed by Śukra, the son of Bhṛgu, is known by the name Śukreśvara. It is worshipped by all Siddhas and immortal ones (i.e. gods).

66. By visiting this (Liṅga) a man shall immediately be liberated from all sins. After death, the man is never born in the world.

67. O Mohinī, Jambūka, a great Daitya was killed here by Mahādeva. By visiting that Liṅga, a man shall attain all desires.

68-69. Know that all these meritorious Liṅgas were installed by the Devas, the leader of whom was Indra. They bestow all desires. Thus, O Mohinī, all these Śiva Liṅgas in the holy place of Avimuktaka have been recounted to you by me.

CHAPTER FIFTYONE

The Greatness of Kāśi (concluded)

Vasu said :—

1. Now I shall narrate to you the excellent glory of the Gaṅgā as it flows through Varanasi. It yields worldly pleasure as well as Liberation from Saṁsāra after death.

2. Whatever meritorious deed is performed in Avimukta shall attain everlasting benefit. No sinner, after going to Avimukta, falls into the hell.

3-4a. O auspicious lady, the sin that is committed at Avimukta shall remain adamantine.[1] All the salvation-yielding Tīrthas in the three worlds, all of them entirely resort to the Gaṅgā which flows towards the north at Kāśī.

4b-6a. He who takes bath, at Daśāśvamedha and visits Śiva, Viśveśvara (Lord of the universe) shall immediately become free from sins and is liberated from worldly ties. Everywhere the Gaṅgā is holy and dispeller of the sin of murder of a Brāhmaṇa. Especially it is so at Varanasi where (the Gaṅgā) flows towards the north.

6b-7a. Merely by taking bath at the confluence of Varaṇā, Asī and Jāhnavī, a man is liberated from all sins.

7b-8a. By taking the holy dip in the Gaṅgā that flows towards the north at Kāśī, in the months of Kārttika as well as Māgha, men are liberated from Mahāpātakas (great sins) and other evils.

8b-9. O highly blessed lady, the well-known Tīrthas in all the worlds come always to the Jāhnavī at Kāśī at the time of Parvans (holy occasions) alongwith the holy shrines.

10-11a. It is to wipe off their own sins originating from their contact with persons defiled by the defects of great sins, that they go everyday to the Gaṅgā that flows towards the north at Kāśī. The waters of Gaṅgā are conducive to liberation from all sorts of sins.

1. Sk. P. —*Kāśī*. 33-115.

11b-13a. O gentle lady, salvation may or may not be obtained in the course of a hundred births by an intelligent devotee who is engaged in holy rites in other holy centres. But here, by the death in the Gaṅgā at Kāśī, salvation is attained in the course of a single birth by a man whose Ātman is not turned round (to the good path ?).

13b-14. O beautiful lady, a deep pool named Dharma-nada is famous there itself. Dharma (piety) stands embodied there and destroys great sins. The dust thereof purges all sins. It is auspicious and it consists of all Tīrthas.

15-16. The river Dhūtapāpā shall dispel multitudes of great sins like the tree on its banks. The following five rivers have been glorified :— viz : Kiraṇā, Dhūtapāpā, Sarasvatī of the holy waters, Gaṅgā and Yamunā. Hence, the holy centre Pañcanada[1] (spot of five rivers) has become well-known in all the three worlds.

17-18a. He who plunges into that holy river does not take up the physical body consisting of five elements (i.e. is liberated). Merely by taking bath in this confluence of five rivers, that dispels all sins, a man pierces through the bower of cosmic egg and goes to the Brahman and realises salvation.

18b-19a. Certainly, one attains in a single day by a holy dip in the Pañcanada at Kāśī, the same benefit as is obtained by means of an elaborate bath and ablution at Prayāga throughout the month of Māgha.

19b-20a. By taking the holy dip in the Tīrtha of Pañcanada, by performing the rite of Tarpaṇa for the Pitṛs and by worshipping Viṣṇu, the lord of Lakṣmī, one never takes rebirth.

1. VV. 15-40 describe the glory of Pañca-nada. It is so-called as there is a confluence of five rivers viz. the Kiraṇā, Dhūta-Pāpā, Sarasvatī, Gaṅgā and Yamunā. And Pañcagaṅgā ghāṭ at Varanasi is regarded as the place of this confluence. Actually there is only the Gaṅgā at the Ghāṭ, the existence of other four rivers is a matter of faith. Dharma-nada, Dhūta Pāpaka, Bindu-saras and Pañca-nada are the names of the same holy centre chronologically in Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali ages. Cf. Sk. P. IV. 59.115-117. VV. 101-113 of the same chapter give interesting stories regarding the names of tributaries (to the Gaṅgā) viz. Dhūta-Pāpā, Kiraṇā.

20b-21a. The satisfaction of the Pitṛs lasts for as many years as the number of gingelly seeds offered to the Pitṛs in the course of the water-libation in the holy Tīrtha of Pañcanada.

21b-22a. The ancestors of those by whom the Śrāddha rite has been performed in the splendid Tīrtha of Pañcanada with great faith, shall be liberated, though they may have been born in different wombs.

22b-24a. In the world of Yama this song is being sung by the groups of Pitṛs. "After seeing the greatness of Pañcanada in regard to the performance of Śrāddha rites, some-one belonging to our family may perform Śrāddha whereby we may be able to go to the Pañcanada Tīrtha at Kāśī and be liberated".

24b-26a. If any wealth is given as gift in the holy centre of Pañcanada, the merit that accrues to one does not dwindle even after Kalpas pass away. Even a barren lady will certainly give birth to a son if she takes her holy dip in the deep pool of the Pañcanada for a whole year and worships Maṅgalā Gaurī.

26b-27a. By performing holy ablution of the goddess well-known in all quarters (Dik-Śruta) with the holy waters of the Pañcanada filtered by means of the cloth, one attains great benefit.

27b-28a. A drop of the water of the Pañcanada was weighed against pots of Pañcāmṛta hundred and eight in number and was found to be superior to it.

28b-29a. By drinking a drop of the waters of Pañcanada with great faith, one attains that purity which is said to be acquired when Pañca-gavya is drunk.

29b-32. By taking the holy dip in the waters of the Pañcanada, one attains hundred times the benefit acquired by Rājasūya and Aśvamedha sacrifices. The Rājasūya and Aśvamedha sacrifices may be the means for attaining heaven, but through the waters of Pañcanada liberation is attained from Dvandva (mutually opposing pairs e.g. Pleasure-Pain) that covers up even the Brahman (i.e. Avidyā). Even the ablution with the waters of heavenly river is not so much approved of by good men as that of the Pañcanada. It is the

bestower of boons not obtained from others. By taking the holy dip for once in the Pañcanada in the month of Kārttika, one derives the same benefit as is obtained by performing penance in the Kṛta age for a hundred years.

33-36. In the bath through the waters of the Pañcanada, one gets more benefit than is obtained through the holy rites of Iṣṭāpūrta performed in the course of whole life elsewhere. There is no other Tīrtha on the whole of the Earth, like Dhūtapāpa since, through a single bath therein, the entire sin accumulated in the course of three births perishes. In the Kṛta age Dharmanada is the holy Tīrtha, in the Tretā, it is Dhūtapāpā; in the Dvāpara it is Bindutīrtha and in the Kali it is Pañcanada. By making the gift of gold of the weight of a Guñjā-berry in the Bindutīrtha, no man shall ever become indigent. He is never devoid of happiness.

37-38a. By giving anything, whether it is a cow, a plot of land, gingelly seeds, gold, a horse, clothes, cooked rice, position or ornament, in the Bindutīrtha, one shall attain an ever lasting benefit.

38b-39a. By offering a single Āhuti in accordance with the injunctions in a well-kindled fire in the holy Tīrtha of Dharmanada, one shall attain the benefit of a crore of Homas.

39b-40. No one is competent to describe adequately the endless greatness of the Pañcanada Tīrtha that is the abode of all splendour of the four-fold aims of life. Thus, O gentle lady, the excellent greatness of Kāśī has been recounted to you.

41-42. It bestows happiness. It bestows salvation on men. It is destructive of sins. Even a Brāhmaṇa-slayer, a drink-addict, a thief of gold, a defiler of the preceptor's bed or a person guilty of principal and subsidiary sins shall attain purity on hearing the greatness of Avimukta.

43. A Brāhmaṇa shall become a great scholar of the Vedas; a Kṣatriya shall be victorious in battle; a Vaiśya shall be the lord of wealth and a Śūdra shall be an associate of the devotees of Viṣṇu.

44-46. O blessed lady, by listening to this, by reading this frequently, one attains all those benefits that are mentioned

in the case of all Yajñas (sacrifices) and all the merits in the case of all Tīrthas. He who seeks learning shall obtain learning. He who seeks wealth shall obtain wealth. He who seeks wife shall get a wife and he who seeks son shall obtain a son. The greatness of Avimukta has been recounted to you by me.

47-48. This must be imparted to a devotee of Viṣṇu or to one engaged in devotion to Śiva or to a devotee of the mother of the universe or to one who serves the sun and Vighneśvara. By giving this to a person rendering service to his preceptor, one shall attain the benefit of the holy dip in a Tīrtha. By giving this to a rogue, a person who censures, a person who hates Brāhmaṇas, cows, and Devas, a person who is malicious towards the elderly persons or a person who is jealous of them, one may attain death.

CHAPTER FIFTYTWO

The Greatness of Puruṣottama[1] *(Jagannātha of Puri)*

Mohinī said :

1. O excellent Brahmin, you are blessed. You are merciful to all embodied beings. (I am blessed) because the excellent greatness of Kāśī has been heard from your lotus-like mouth.

1. It is significant that the NP. attaches the highest importance to Puruṣottama Kṣetra (Jagannātha of Puri—Orissa) as it devotes 843 verses to it, while Kāśī is described only in 279 verses and Prayāga, the so-called King of all *Tīrthas* only in 229 verses. According to the author of the NP., the traditionally famous *Tri-sthalī*—Prayāga, Varanasi and Gayā is less important than Puruṣottama Kṣetra. And his order of priorities in describing Kṣetras is Gayā, Kāśī, Puruṣottama Kṣetra and Prayāga. This data gives credence to the theory that the author of the NP must be a person from a state in East India.

2. I feel that I have accomplished my objects in life since now I have been enlightened by you. Although I had fallen into the ocean of worldly existence, I have been redeemed by you, the merciful one.

3. Now I wish to hear, O bestower of honour, the greatness of a holy place of Hari, by going to which men become contented.

4. It is reported that a holy centre of Viṣṇu, the most excellent among other centres is described in the Purāṇas by sage and Brāhmaṇas as efficacious in granting Liberation from Saṁsāra.

5. May that be recounted, O blessed one, if I am liked by you as a disciple of yours. Indeed good men are always engaged in rendering continuous service to all the people of the world.

Vasu said :

6. O gentle lady, listen. I shall recount to you about the excellent greatness of the holy centre named Puruṣottama as narrated by god Brahmā.

7-8a. In the whole of this earth, Bhārata is said to be a Karmabhūmi (the land of holy rites). There, in the Bhāratavarṣa, on the shores of the southern sea, is a land known as Utkala. It is the bestower of heaven and Mokṣa (salvation) on all.

8b-9a. It is to the north of the ocean and it extends upto Virajamaṇḍala (a country stretching for ten miles round Jaipur on the river Vaitarṇī). This land is embellished with all the attributes of those who are habituated in performing meritorious deeds.

9b-11. O lady of large eyes, it should be known that there are many Tīrthas and holy shrines. In Utkala, on the northern shores of the ocean, in that land which is the most excellent of all, there is a great holy centre which yields salvation and dispels sins. It is in a place covered with sand everywhere. It is sacred and it bestows piety and love.

A large no. of verses on this topic are common to the NP and the Brahma Purāṇa (BM. P.), the NP, being presumably the borrower.

12-13a. The holy centre which is difficult of access is ten Yojanas in extent. Just as the moon is the best among constellations;[1] just as the ocean is the best among lakes (water-reservoirs), so is the holy centre Puruṣottama the best among sacred places.

13b-14a. Just as the fire-god is the best among Vasus, Just as Śaṅkara is the best among Rudras, so is the holy centre Puruṣottama, the most excellent of all holy centres.

14b-15a. Just as the Brāhmaṇa is the best among the castes, and Vainateya (Garuḍa) (the excellent most) among birds, so also Purusottama is the most excellent among holy centres.

15b-16a. Just as Skanda is among commanders; Kapila among Siddhas.

16b-25a. Airāvata among leading elephants; Bhṛgu among great sages; Meru among the mountains; the Himālayas among the immovables (i.e. mountains); Uccaiśśravas among the horses; Uśanas among the wise thinkers; Vyāsa among the sages; Kubera among Yakṣas and Rākṣasas, the mind among sense-organs; the earth among the elements; the Aśvattha among the trees; the wind-god among those who purify; Arundhatī among women; the thunderbolt among weapons; like the letter 'A' among letters; like the Gāyatrī among metres; the head (Uttamāṅga) among limbs; the spiritual lore of salvation among all lores; the king among men; Kāmadhenu (the wish-yielding cow) among cows; gold among all metals; Vāsuki among serpents; Prahlāda among Daityas; Rāma among the wielders of weapons; sharks among fishes; lion among beasts; Varuṇa among water deities; Yama among those who restrain; the milk ocean among oceans; Nārada among divine sages; Bṛhaspati (Jupiter) among priests; Kāla (Time) among reckoners; Bhāskara (the sun) among planets. Praṇava (Oṁ) among the

1. VV. 13-24 are an echo of BG (Bhagavad-gitā) X. 21-33. In the BG., the best specimen of individual is the *Vibhūti* of the Lord, here Puruṣottama Kṣetra is the best in all holy places as the Lord's *Vibhūtis* are the excellent most ones in their respective categories or species.

mantras and virtuous rites among duties—so should be known) Śrīpuruṣottama among holy centres.

25b-26. By visiting at least once, Puruṣottama who stands on the shore of the ocean, by knowing the Brahmavidyā once, there is no further stay within the womb.

Thus the holy centre is endowed with all attributes. It is highly diffiicult of access.

27. O fair lady, Puruṣottama, the lord of Devas, the Ātman of the Universe, pervading the universe stays where the holy centre Puruṣottama is.

28-29a. Where the lord of the universe, the source of origin of the universe is present, everything is established there. All the following are present therein :- Aja (Brahmā), Indra, Rudra, Agni and other Devas; O highly blessed lady, all these stay there always in that land.

29b-35. The following too are present :— The Gandharvas, the celestial damsels, Siddhas, Pitṛs, Devas, human beings, Yaksas, Vidyādharas, the sages of praise-worthy holy vows; the sages Vālakhilya and others; Kaśyapa and other Prajāpatis; Suparṇas; Kinnaras; Nāgas, and other residents of heaven; the four Vedas along with their ancillaries; the different scriptures; Itihāsas, Purāṇas, sacrifices wherein many monetary gifits (as religious fees) are given; the different sacred rivers; the holy centres and shrines; the ocean and the mountains were established in that land. Who will not like to live in such a meritorious land inhabited by the gods, sages and Pitṛs and fully equipped with all means of enjoyment ? There is the surpassing excellence of that lord. What is it that surpasses that wherein the lord of the universe, Puruṣottama, the bestower of salvation is present ? Blessed are those men who stay in Utkala and resemble the Devas.

36. Those men who take bath in the waters of the Tīrtharāja (the king of holy centres, viz. the Sea) and visit Puruṣottama, stay in the heaven and not in the abode of a Rājasa nature.

37. Fruitful is the life of those residents of Utkala of great intellect who habitually reside in the meritorious holy centre of Śrīpuruṣottama in Orissa.

38-40a. (Blessed are they) who see the lotus-like face of Kṛṣṇa, wherein the lips are very red like copper, the eyes are pleasant and large, the eyebrows, the tresses and coronets are very beautiful; which is embellished with beautiful ear-rings, which is beautified with smiles, and charming earrings; wherein the teeth are beautiful and the nose, cheeks and forehead have all good characteristics and which cause delight to the three worlds.

40b-41a. O gentle lady, it is reported that formerly, in the Kṛta age there was a glorious king wellknown as Indradyumna. His exploits were like those of Indra.

41b-42. He was truthful of speech, pure, clever and competent. He was the most excellent among the warrious wielding weapons. He was charming and blessed, brave and a liberal donor. He was an enjoyer of pleasures, and pleasing in speech. He was the performer of all Yajñas, and he was friendly to Brāhmaṇas.

43. He was truthful of promise. He was an adept in the Vedas, Scriptures and the science of archery. He was contented. He was popular with men and women like the moon on a Full-moon day.

44. He was like the sun in being too dazzling to be seen directly; he was as sweet as the moon; he was a devotee of Viṣṇu; he was endowed with truthfulness; he had conquered anger, he had subjugated sense-organs.

45. He was engaged in spiritual learning; he was fond of virtue and piety and brave. Thus the king, the abode of all attributes, protected the earth.

46. He became inclined to the propitiation of Viṣṇu. He thought, "How shall I propitiate Janārdana, the lord of the Devas.

47. In which holy centre, Tīrtha, or hermitage shall I do So." Thinking thus he mentally surveyed the whole of the earth.

48-49a. He reviewed before his mind's eye the various holy centres of the earth that dispel sins. Finally, he decided on

the well-known great holy centre Puruṣottama that bestows salvation.

49b-50. The king went there with the full complement of his vehicles and army. He got a lofty palace erected there. He performed a horse-sacrifice in accordance with the injunctions and distributed wealth by way of monetary gifts.

51-52. The powerful king installed Saṅkarṣaṇa, Kṛṣṇa and Subhadrā there. He caused five Tīrthas[1] to be constructed there. With great devotion he performed ablution, charitable gift, Japa, Homa and the visit to the deity. He propitiated lord Puruṣottama every day in accordance with the injunctions and with great devotion. Thanks to the grace of the lord of the Devas, he attained salvation.

Mohinī enquired :

53-56a. O Lord, was there an already installed image of Viṣṇu in that excellent, meritorious sacred Vaiṣṇavite place called Puruṣottama, for the sake of which the king went there along with his army and vehicles and established the images of Kṛṣṇa, Balarāma and Subhadrā, the bestower of auspicious things. I have great doubt, O excellent Brāhmaṇa and feel a great surprise too. I wish to hear everything. Tell me the reason thereof.

Vasu narrated :

56b. Listen to the anecdote forming its background—a story which destroys sins.

57. I shall succinctly narrate to you what was formerly asked by goddess Śrī on the top of the golden peak of mount Sumeru which was full of all wondrous things.

58-59a. The goddess bowed down with her head to Lord Jagannātha, the imperishable (eternal), creator of the world

1. Every important Tīrtha has generally a set of five important-most sub-tīrthas which are called jointly Pañca-Tīrthī. According to BM. P. 60.11, Mārkaṇḍeya pool, Banyan tree (identified with Kṛṣṇa), Balarāma, the ocean (the Bay of Bengal) and Indradyumna lake (*Saras*) are the five important Tīrthas. The credit of creating or causing these is given to Indradyumna here.

who was residing there. Out of her desire for the benefit of the world, she asked this following question regarding the excellent-most holy place on the earth.

Śrī said :

59b-61. "O lord of all the worlds, tell me now clearing the doubts in my heart. The mortal world, the earth, is full of great miracles. It is very difficult to perform auspicious Karmans leading to Mokṣa here. It is a great ocean of lust and fury and contains big sharks (crocodiles) in the form of coveteousness and delusion. What is it, then, whereby the Ātman is liberated from impassable ocean of worldly existence ? Excepting you there is no one in the world who will propound everything and dispel my doubt."

62. On hearing her words thus, Janārdana, the lord of the Devas, spoke with great pleasure and explained the great means of happiness that is comparable to the nectar and great essence of everything—the means that is easily achievable yield great benefit and will not cause any strain.

The glorious Lord said :

63-64.[1] O goddess, there is a wellknown excellent holy centre named Puruṣottama. In the three worlds there is nothing else equal to this. O goddess of the Devas, by glorifying it, one is liberated from all sins.

65. It is not fully comprehended and realised by men; Daityas or Dānavas. O fair-faced lady, this is pointed out by Marīci and other excellent sages.

66-67a. On the shore of the southern sea, there is a holy (Indian) fig (Nyagrodha) tree. Even during the (close of the) kalpa, when everything is destroyed by means of great meteors (?) it is not destroyed. It remains by itself there.

67b-69a. As soon as one sees that banyan tree or if one resorts to its shade frequently, the sin of even Brāhmaṇa-slaughter

1. The rest of this chapter from vv. 63-87 is a prolonged quotation (with a few verses deleted in between) from the BM. P. Ch. 45 vv. 53-89, the only difference is that in the NP. the interlocutors are Śrī and Śrī Bhagavān (Viṣṇu) and in the BM. P. god Brahmā and sages.

perishes. What then about other lesser evils ? Those creatures (living beings) which circumambulate it and make obeisance to it, shake off their sins. All of them go to Keśava's abode (Vaikuṇṭha).

69b-71a. On the southern side of the shrine of Keśava and to the north of the holy fig tree is the region of holy Dharma. By seeing the image made by the lord himself at the place, men go to my mansion without any exertion.

71b-72a. Going (along that way) once Dharmarāja (Yama) saw me, approached me and bowing down his head, spoke to me thus :-

72b. "Obeisance to you O lord, to the brilliant refulgence, to the lord of worlds.

73-81a. I bow down to that lord who stays in the milk-ocean; who lies down on the extensive body of Śeṣa; who is the most excellent one; who is the bestower of boons; who is the everlasting maker of the worlds; who is Viṣṇu. the unborn (eternal) lord of the universe; who is omniscient; who is unconquered; who is dark in complexion like the blue lily; whose eyes resemble the lotuses; who is present everywhere, who is devoid of attributes, quiet, the unchanging creator of the universe; who is the maker of worlds; who is the lord of worlds; who is conducive to happiness; who is the ancient Puruṣa, worthy of being known; who is both manifest and unmanifest, who is the eternal ancient Being, who is the creator; who is a sanctifying holy being unto all the worlds; who is the preceptor of the universe; who is endowed with Śrīvatsa on his chest; who is bedecked in Vanamālās (garlands of sylvan flowers); who is clad in yellow garments; who has four arms who wields conch, discus and iron club; who is beautified with necklaces and armlets; who wears coronet and bracelets; who is endowed with all auspicious characteristics; who is devoid of all sense organs; who is as steady and firm as a mountain; who is subtle, eternal and of the form of fiery brilliance; who is devoid of both existence and nonexistence; pervasive and beyond Prakṛti. I bow down to that Īśvara, the lord of the universe, the lord bestowing happiness. Thus the lord of Dharma (Yama) eulogised me with different hymns in the vicinity of the holy fig tree. Then he made obeisance to me.

81b-83. "O highly blessed lady, on seeing him standing with palms joined with reverence after obeisance, O gentle lady, I asked the god of Death, the reason for the eulogy, "O mighty armed Vaivasvata, you are identical with all Devas. Why did you eulogise me thus. Tell me succinctly".

Yama said :

84-85. In this holy shrine, well-known after Puruṣottama there is an idol made of Indranīla (sapphire). It bestows all desires. O lotus-eyed deity, men devoid of desires see that idol with faith and (single-minded) emotional feelings and go to the world called Śveta (Dvīpa).

86. Hence, O destroyer of enemies, I cannot proceed with my usual work of chastising the sinners. O great lord, be pleased. Withdraw this idol, O lord."

87. On hearing these words of Vaivasvata Yama, I spoke to him thus— "O Yama, I shall conceal this idol with sands all round".

88. Thereafter, O gentle lady, that idol was concealed with creepers, so that men desirous of going to heaven could not see it.

89. O gentle lady, after hiding it with creepers of golden coverings (?) I bade farewell to Yama to the southern direction".

90-91. Janārdana, the Lord of the Devas, narrated to her the following incidents that happened thereafter in the holy place, the famous sacred shrine of Puruṣottama, when the sapphire idol was concealed—all the following incidents occurred:-

92-97. Indradyumna's departure; visit to the shrine; description of the holy centre; O Mohinī, its prosperity, the vision of Baladeva and of Kṛṣṇa in particular and that of Subhadrā; the greatness of them all; the vision of Narasiṁha; the glorification of prosperity; the vision of Ananta and Vāsudeva; the glorification of his attributes; the greatness of Śvetamādhava; the description of the gateway of heaven; the sight of the ocean; the ablution therein and the performance of Tarpaṇa rite: the greatness of ablution in the sea and of Indradyumna pool (saras) ; the benefit of the Pañcatīrthas (five

shrines and holy pools) on the full moon day in the month of Jyeṣṭha; the bath of Kṛṣṇa and holy Balarāma; the benefit of all pilgrimages; the description of the world of Viṣṇu and again of the holy place. Thus Puruṣottama himself described to her the truth of all these things.

CHAPTER FIFTYTHREE

The Greatness of Puruṣottama (Contd.)

Mohini said :

1-2. O leading sage, kindly narrate to me what I ask about the ancient Being; as to how those idols were formerly made by Indradyumna and in what manner was Mādhava pleased with him; O, Brāhmaṇa. elucidate everything to me, as I am eager to hear about it.

Vasu said :

3. O lady of beautiful eyes, listen, I shall recount the ancient story of the origin of the idols, the mythological tradition that is on a par with the Vedas.

4. When the great Sacrifice commenced and the mansion had been built, king Indradyumna began to worry about the idols day and night.[1]

5. He pondered : "By what means can I see Puruṣottama the lord of the Devas, the conceiver and creator of the worlds and the cause of creation, maintenance and dissolution of the worlds ?".

6. The king who was anxious and worried could not sleep properly by day or by night. He did not enjoy the various

1. VV. 4-9 are selected Verbatim from BM. P. 48. 4-12. Thus NP. 4, 5, 6, NP 7, 8, 9=BM.P 10, 11, 11.

worldly pleasures nor was he interested in taking bath or bedecking himself.

7. "On the surface of the earth three types of idols befitting Viṣṇu and marked with all characteristics are seen. Viz. : the idols made of stone, of wood or of metals.

8. The idols made of these three, when installed shall give pleasure. They shall be the beloved of the deity and worshipped by the Devas".—Thus the king pondered over in his mind.

9. After worshipping Puruṣottama in accordance with the injunctions in the scripture 'Pañcarātra', the anxious ruler of the Earth began to eulogise him.

Indradyumna prayed :[1]

10. O Vāsudeva, obeisance be to you, O cause of liberation, homage to you, O lord of all the worlds, save me from the ocean of births (and deaths) and the worldly existence.

11. Hail to you, O Puruṣottama, resembling a pure silken garment, O Saṁkarṣaṇa, obeisance be to you. Rescue me, O supporter of the earth.

12. Obeisance be to you (the deity) with the golden womb; Bow to you, the shark-emblemed lord. O lover of Rati, obeisance to you. Save me, O destroyer of Śambara.

13. Hail to you (the deity) resembling the cloud (in complexion) ; salute to you (the deity) favourably disposed to the devotees. O Aniruddha, obeisance be to you. Redeem me. Be the bestower of boons.[2]

14. Bow to you the seat of residence of the Devas. Obeisance to you who are dear to the Devas. O Nārāyaṇa, obeisance be to you, protect me who have sought refuge in you.

15. Hail to you, O most excellent one among powerful beings; Obeisance to you O ploughshare-armed one. Bow to you, the most excellent one among the Devas. Obeisance to you the lotus-born.

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1. This prayer by Indradyumna—vv. 10-68 (the end of the chapter) is a prolonged quotation (with a few deletions) from BM. P. ch. 51. 1-59 which is also the prayer by Indradyumna.

2. VV. 10-13 are salutations to the four Vyūhas (manifestations of Viṣṇu). The NP. is depicted by the Pañcarātra Āgama.

16. O four-faced god, O creator of the universe; protect me, O great-grandfather of the universe, obeisance to you, who have the lustre of the blue cloud. Hail to you, one worshipped by the gods.

17. Redeem me, O Viṣṇu. O lord of the universe, Rescue me who am immersed in the ocean of worldly existence—O deity resembling the fire of dissolution, obeisance to you, the destroyer of the Daityas.

18-19. O Narasiṁha of great prowess, protect me, O deity of blazing eyes. O great boar, just as the earth that was formerly sunk into the waters had been lifted up from the nether-worlds, so also you rescue me from the ocean of misery. O Kṛṣṇa, the forms of your limbs (your ancillary forms) that bestow boons have been eulogised by me.

20-22. You and these viz. Baladeva and others are stationed in separate forms. O lord, O lord of the Devas, Garuḍa and others are your ancillaries. So also are the guardians of the quarters along with their weapons, such as Vāsava (Indra) and others. O Acyuta, O lord of the universe, O lord of the Devas with large eyes expressing delight, all your forms, these and others, have been mentioned by learned men—all have been worshipped and eulogised and bowed to by me.

23-25. Grant ye unto me that boon which bestows virtue, love, wealth and liberation. O Hari, your different forms e.g. Saṁkarṣaṇa and others that have been glorified are related to your worship. Hence, they have been incorporated in you, O lord of Devas. No factual difference exists between you and these forms of yours. The different forms of yours have been mentioned so, only in a secondary sense. How can man call you who are the non-dualistic one, as dualistic.

26. O Hari, you are but one, the pervader of all, of the nature of consciousness and unsullied : Your highest form is that which is devoid of existence as well as non-existence.

27-28a. It is unsmeared, free from impurities, subtle, firm, steady and eternal. It is devoid of all conditioning characteristics : It is pure existence only and is well stabilised. Even a

Deva does not know about it. O lord, how can I, a human being know it ?

28b-30a. The other form of yours, that which is yellow-robed, four-armed, wearing the conch, discus and iron club, having coronet and armlets, embellished with Śrīvatsa in the chest and bedecked in garlands of sylvan flowers, is worshipped by the Devas and others that are dependent on you.

30b-32. O lord, the most excellent one among all gods, the bestower of fearlessness (or Mokṣa) on the devotees, save me, O deity of beautiful lotus-like eyes, rescue me who am immersed in the ocean of worldly existence and mundane affairs. O lord of Devas, O lord of Kamalā, O Madhusūdana, excepting you I do not see anyone else in whom I can seek refuge. Be pleased. I am over-whelmed by hundreds of ailments and old age; I am afflicted by many miseries.

33. I am confounded, sometimes delighted and sometimes aggrieved; I have been bound by the nooses of Karman. I have fallen into the extremely fierce and terrible ocean of worldly existence.

34-35. O lord, I am deluded by your Māyā for a long time. I have been wandering (in the ocean of mundane existence) which is very difficult to cross, the ocean with worldly objects as its waters, which is highly agitated with passion and hatred; which is deep due to the whirlpools of sense-organs, and is turbulent due to the billows of greedy thirst and grief which has neither receptacle nor a support which is actually insignificant but heavily moving to and fro.

36-37a. I am born again and again in thousands of species of creatures. O Janārdana, in this world thousands and ten thousands of different births have been undergone by me.

37b-38a The Vedas have been learned by me along with their ancillaries. The different kinds of scriptures, the Itihāsas the Purāṇas and many kinds of arts and crafts have been learned by me.

38b-39a. Dissatisfaction and satisfaction have been met with by me. Many times I have hoarded wealth. Many times I have spent (squandered) much. O lord of the universe, decline and increase, rise and fall I have faced in my life.

39b-40. I have experienced association with and separation from wives, friends and kinsmen. Different kinds of fathers and mothers have been seen by me. Many sorrows have been experienced by me and many happy occasions too.

41. Relatives, sisters, brothers and kinsmen have been acquired by me. I have occupied the bellies of women, bellies that are slimy due to faeces and urine.

42. O lord, while staying in the womb, great misery has been experienced by me. Miseries have been experienced during childhood as well as during haughty youth.

43-44a. O Hṛṣīkeśa, miseries have been experienced in the course of old age by me. Those miseries that are usually experienced at death, in the secret path of Yama's abode, and in the hell, full of tortures, have been experienced by me.

44b-46. I have been born again and again in various species, such as those of germs, insects, trees, elephants, horses, deer, birds, buffaloes, cows, and every other wild animal. I have been born in the wombs of Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas Vaiśyas as well as Śūdras. I have been born in the abodes of rich Vaiśyas, Ksatriyas, pious ascetics (Brāhmaṇas), of kings and kings' servants and other embodied beings.

47. O Lord, I have been born in their houses again and again, O lord, I had worked as a slave for the servants of many men.

48. I have attained poverty or affluence. Many have been killed by me. I have been killed by many others. Things belonging to me have been destroyed. Many have been caused to be killed by me.

49-50a. Things have been given to me by others and things have been given by me to others. I have suffered by what has been done by fathers, friends mothers and wives and have been delighted too (by what they did). On many occasions, due to misery my face has been washed by my tears.

50b-51a. O lord, there is no such spot among the Devas, animals, human beings, the mobile and immobile beings, where I have not been.

51b-54. O lord of the universe, sometimes I stayed in hell and sometimes in heaven. Sometimes in human worlds and sometimes in animal kingdom. Just as someone, in the mechanical device for lifting water fixed to a hole falls up and down or remains in the middle, so also O excellent one among Devas, I have had recourse to the series of my Karmans. Thus in this wheel of worldly existence, that is very terrible and that causes hairs to stand on their ends, I have been whirling for a long time. I do not see the end thereof.

55. O Hari, I do not know what I am doing. All my sense-organs are worn out and agitated. I have been overwhelmed by grief and greed. I am a terrified fugitive. I have lost consciousness.

56. O lord, utterly maimed and crippled, I have now sought refuge in you. Save me, O Kṛṣṇa, rescue me who am immersed in the ocean of worldly existence.

57. O lord of the universe, be merciful if you consider me that I am your devotee. Excepting you, I have no other kinsmen who will be worrying for my sake and take my care.

58. O Lord, after resorting to you as the lord, I have no fear from anywhere either in life or death or about my well-being.

59. How can there be good states and liberation from the bondage of worldly existence in the case of those base men who do not duly worship you, O lord ?

60. O what use is their nobility of birth, or good conduct or learning or even life, if they have no devotion to Keśava, the creator of the universe ?

61. Those who have Asuraic character and those who are deluded and those who censure you, do fall into the terrible hell and are born again and again.

62. O lord, those who are of evil activities and those who speak ill of you are base men. They do not have any way of escape from the hellish ocean.

63. O Hari, where I am destined to be born as a result of my Karmans, may my devotion to you be ever unimpaired.

64. By propitiating you, the great one, Daityas,

human beings, and others too in a body have attained the greatest Siddhi. O lord, who would not like to worship you ?

65. Even Brahmā and others are not competent to eulogise you who are beyond Prakṛti. O lord, out of my ignorance, I too have eulogised you imperfectly.

66. Hence, forgive my guilt if you have mercy towards me. O Hari, even if others commit offence, good men forgive them.

67-68. Hence, O lord of the Devas, be pleased. With devotion I have resorted to your affection. O lord, you have been eulogised by me with the mind full of devotion. May that be fruitful. O Vāsudeva, obeisance be to you.

CHAPTER FIFTYFOUR

The Glory of Puruṣottama (Contd.)

Vasu said :

1.[1] Eulogised thus by him then, the Garuḍa-emblemed deity Viṣṇu became delighted, O blessed lady, and gave him everything mentally desired by him.

2. The man who worships the lord of the universe everyday and intelligently eulogises him with this hymn, certainly attains liberation.

3. The pure and learned man who performs the Japa of this excellent hymn during the three junctions (i.e. the dawn, dusk and midday) accomplishes (the four objectives of life, viz.) virtue, wealth, love and liberation.

1. VV. 1-12 are the same as BM.P. 49-60-71. Although the NP begins a new chapter (54), vv. 1-12 the *Phala-Śruti* constitute the eulogy by Indradyumna in the previous (53) chapter. As such these verses should have formed part of the previous chapter as is done in the BE.P. ch. 49 where vv. 60-71 (the Phala-Śruti verses) follow Indradyumna's prayer in a natural context.

4. He who reads, listens to and narrates this with concentration and purity of mind, will shake off all sins and go to the eternal world of Viṣṇu.

5. This is conducive to wealth. It dispels sins. It is auspicious and it yields worldly pleasures and salvation. It is an esoteric secret very difficult to be attained. It is meritorious. It should not be given to anyone and everyone (indiscriminately).

6. None shall ever impart this to an atheist, a foolish fellow, an ungrateful one, an arrogant person, a man of wicked intentions or one without devotion.

7. It should be imparted to one endowed with devotion, to one endowed with good qualities and conduct, to a devotee of Viṣṇu, to a quiescent person and to one who is by nature faithful and who practises befitting rites and observances.

8. This great hymn of Puruṣottama narrated by me is the cause of destruction of all sins; it is designated as mercy; it yields happiness and liberation. It is the most excellent one bestowing the desired benefits.

9. Those who continuously meditate on the ancient Puruṣa who is very subtle and who resembles the pure firmament, attain salvation. They enter Viṣṇu like the ghee that has been consigned to the sacrificial fire with Mantras.

10. The lord alone is the destroyer of the miseries of Saṁsāra. He is greater than the greatest. There is none supreme to him. He is the creator, sustainer and the annihilator of all. Viṣṇu is the same (impartial and good) to all. He is the essence of everything.

11. Of what avail are these—viz. learning, good qualities, Yajñas, charitable gifts and severe penances to those persons who have no devotion to Kṛṣṇa, the preceptor of the universe and the bestower of happiness and salvation.

12. He who cherishes devotion to the deity called Puruṣottama is blessed in this world. He is pure, he is a learned scholar; he is affluent speaker, he has righteous conduct. He is the knower. He is the donor. He is the speaker of truth.

13-14. O daughter of Brahmā, after eulogising thus and bowing down to the eternal Vāsudeva, the lord of the universe

and the bestower of all desired benefits, the worried king spread Kuśa grass on the ground and spread his cloth over it. With his mind dwelling on the deity, he went to sleep on the bare ground.[1]

15. He thought to himself thus—"How will Janārdana, the lord of the Devas, manifest himself to me ? When shall this lord dispel my anxieties ?"

16. When the king went to sleep, Vāsudeva, the preceptor of the universe, revealed himself to him in the dream in the form of) the wielder of the discus.

17-19a. He saw in his dream the lord of the Devas, the lord of the universe, who holds the conch and the discus; who is calm; who wields the iron club and the lotus by the tip of his hands; who is armed with the bow Śārṅga, the arrows and the sword; who is encircled with the dazzling halo of brilliant refulgence: who displaced the lustre of the sun at the time of the end of the Yuga; who resembled the blue lapis lazuli in complexion, who was seated on the back of Garuḍa and who had eight arms.

19b. On seeing him, the lord said :- "O king of great intellect, well done, O ruler of the earth, I am satisfied with this divine sacrifice, your devotion and faith. Why do you worry unnecessarily ?

20. O King, I shall tell you the means whereby you will get the idol that is eternal and worthy of being worshipped by the kings.

21-24. When this night is over and the pure sun rises up you must find out this tree. It is inside the waters of the sea. The place is beautified with various trees. On the shore also much water can be seen, O King, that has accumulated from the tides of the sea. Supported by the shore, the great tree stands there partly in water and partly on the ground. The tidal waves lash against it but it is firm and steady (and immovable). It does not quake or move.

25-27. Take an axe in your hand and wade alone (without taking any companion) through the waves sportingly. You

1. VV. 13-14 to 71 in the NP are the same as Bm. P. Ch. 50 with a few v.ls. The description of the *Puruṣottama* idols in *Sk. P. II.* ch. 19 slightly differs from that in the NP.

will notice the tree by means of snigs indicated; unhesitatingly cut it down. On seeing the huge tree of wonderful appearance felled down, you make an idol of the lord from that tree. You should cast off your anxiety that deludes you.

28. After saying this, Hari, the highly blessed one disappeared. The king too was extremely surprised by what he saw his dream.

29. He spent the remaining part of that night keeping awake with his mind dwelling on the lord, repeating the Mantras of Viṣṇu and the hymn pertaining to him.

30. When the night dawned, with his mind not dwelling on anything else, he duly took his bath in the sea.

31. He gave villages and cities by way of religious gifts to the Brāhmaṇas The excellent king performed the duties of the forenoon and went ahead.

32. He did not take any chariot, footsoldier, elephant or charioteer along with him. The ruler of the earth entered the great seashore, alone.

33. He saw the lofty tree, the brilliant great tree, the great destroyer (?) and one that has grown immensely. It was auspicious but had no fruit (viphalam).*

34. It was a means of great festival for him (Mahotsavam)** (?) It had such a huge stem. It lay as though it was sleeping by the side of the water. It had the colour of the dense Indian madder. It had no name or genus.

35. On seeing the tree of Viṣṇu, the lord of men rejoiced. With the sharp axe he cut it off steadily.

36. The mind of Indra's friend (Indradyumna) was in a dilemma. While he was looking at the wood (i.e. the tree cut by him) there appeared a miraculous sight.

37-39. Viśvakarman and Viṣṇu assumed the forms of Brāhmaṇas. Those two noble souls came there. They were shining brilliantly with great lustre. They had divine scents, garlands, and unguents; they then approched king Indradyumna, the

*This verse is he same as *Brahma P.* 50.21 where that Purāṇa reads *Mahātigam* i.e. great transcending (all in height), and *Vipula* 'extensive, for *Viphala* of the NP above.

**_Brahma P._ 50.2 reads *mahotsedha* : 'of great height and thickness.'

friend of Indra, and enquired : "O great king, what will you do here ? O mighty-armed one, why was this tree felled down ?

40. Unaided by anyone, in this great impassable lonely and dense forest on the shores of the great sea, this huge tree has been felled down."

41-42. O lady of beautiful eyebrows, on hearing their words, the king was filled with joy. On seeing those two Brāhmaṇas who had come there like the moon and the sun, he bowed down to them, the lords of the universe, and stood there with the head bent down. Then he addressed these sweet words to them :-

43. "It is my intention that I should make an idol of this wood in order to propitiate the god of the Devas, the lord of the universe who has neither a beginning nor an end, the lord who cannot be measured or comprehended.

44. In the course of a dream, I have been advised by the lord of the Devas, the greatest and noblest Ātman; I have recounted that to you also".

45. On hearing the words of the king who was on a par with Devendra, the lord of the universe became delighted. Laughingly he spoke these words :

46-48. "O ruler of the earth, well done. Your mind had been excellent, since you had an inclination towards the propitiation of Viṣṇu. This ocean of mundane existence is very terrible. It is like the leaf of a plantain tree (that can be torn easily). it is insignificant, yet it is full of miseries. It is boisterous and turbulent due to lust and furry. It is full of whirlpools of sense-organs. It is impassable and generates horripilation. Hundreds of ailments repeatedly assail the people. The ocean of worldly existence is like a transient bubble.

49-50. O leading king, you are blessed; you are adorned with the good attributes. The whole earth inclusive of subjects is blessed. The earth where you are the overlord, inclusive of mountains, forests and cities, containing many cities, villages and towns and adorned with the people of four castes, is blessed, since you are the lord and protector of the subjects.

51. O highly blessed one; Come on, come on. Stay under this tree which is cool and pleasant. Sit here with us discussing pious and virtuous matters.

52. This most excellent one among sculptors and artisans has come here to render help to you. He is equal to Viśvakarman himself. He is an adept in all arts and crafts.

53-54. He will make the idol thought of by you for me. Leave off the seashore". On hearing these words of the Brāhmaṇa, the king left the seashore and went near him. The most excellent king went and sat under the cool shade of the tree.

55. Thereafter, O daughter of Brahmā, the Ātman of the universe instructed the chief of artisans—"Make these idols in their respective shapes and sizes.

56. The first idol shall be the form of Kṛṣṇa. It shall be extremely peaceful with eyes large and resembling the petals of lotus. It must have the mark of Śrīvatsa and the jewel Kaustubha. It must wield the conch, discus and iron club.

57. The second idol should be white in complexion. It must have the lustre and colour of cow's milk. It must be marked with the sign of Svastika. It is the lord wielding the ploughshare as his weapon. It is the highly mighty lord named Ananta.

58. His final limit for nature has not been known by the Devas, Dānavas, Gandharvas, Vidyādharas and serpents. Hence he is remembered as Ananta.

59. The third idol shall be that of the sister of Vāsudeva. She has the golden complexion. She is extremely beautiful. She is Subhadrā marked by all the auspicious characteristics."

60. On hearing these words of his, Viśvakarman, the expert in excellent artisanship, instantaneously made those idols with beautiful and auspicious characteristics.

61. He made the idols shine resplendently with ear-rings of diverse kinds in their ears. Markings of the discus and the ploughshare were clear in the hands. They shone like the sun (?)

62. The first idol had white colour like the lustre of the autumnal moon. The eyes were red and the body huge and there was a hood over the head. It was Bala wearing the blue cloth. He was fierce and had wonderful earrings. He held a great

ploughshare and a big threshing rod. He was divine in form.

63. The second idol resembled the blue cloud in complexion. It had eyes resembling lotuses. The lord resembled the flower of Atasī (Hemp or flax) and his eyes were as large as the petals of the lotus.

64. He was Hari, Acyuta, with the Śrīvatsa mark on the chest, with shining yellow robes. He was divine in character, holding the discus and the conch. He dispelled all sins.

65-67. The third idol had the golden lustre. It had eyes as large as the petals of a lotus. (It was that of Subhadrā) covered with various garments, bedecked in necklaces and armlets and equipped with ornaments of different kinds. There was a necklace of gems and jewels. The bosom was plump and protruding. Viśvakarman thus made a beautiful idol.

68-69. The king saw that wonderful feat and was surprised very much. Within a moment, he saw those beautiful idols covered with pairs of divine robes, embellished with different kinds of jewels and richly endowed with all characteristics. Being very much surprised, he spoke these words.

70. "Is it possible that both of you are Devas who have come here assuming the forms of Brāhmaṇas ? Both of you achieve wonderful feats and divine activities. You are super-human.

71-72. Are you Devas or human beings, or excellent Yakṣas or Vidyādharas, or Brahmā and Viṣṇu or Vasu and Rudra or the twin gods Aśvins ? I do not know your true nature (since) you are present here assuming a magic form. I seek refuge in you. Kindly reveal yourselves to me."

The Brāhmaṇa replied :

73.[1] "I am neither a god nor a Yakṣa. I am neither a Daitya nor a king of Devas. I am neither Brahmā nor Rudra. Know me as Puruṣottama.

1. VV. 73-125 in the NP. are the same as Bm. P. ch. 51. 1-58 with a few deletions, and some v.l.s.

74. I am the destroyer of the anguish of all the worlds, I possess infinite might and manliness. I am worthy of being worshipped by all living beings. I have no end.

75. I am that which is learnt (i.e. described) in all scriptures and is so recounted in the Vedāntas (Upaniṣads). I am) that which has been spoken of by Yogins as Vāsudeva who is approachable through meditation.

76. I alone am Brahmā himself. I am Viṣṇu; I am Śiva. I am Indra, the king of the Devas. I am Yama, the restrainer of the universe.

77-78. I am all the elements such as the Earth etc. : I am the three sacrificial fires as well as the devourer of what is consigned as offerings. I am Varuṇa, the lord of the waters, the earth, the mountains, whatever there is in this world worthy of being spoken about (in words)—whether mobile or immobile. Know me to be the embodiment of the universe. There is nothing other than I in the whole universe.

79. O excellent king. I am pleased with you. O king of good holy rites, choose a boon. I shall give you whatever is desired by you, whatever is fixed into your heart.

80. A vision of mine is not possible even in a dream for non-meritorious persons. But, as for you, you have seen me directly, thanks to your steadfast devotion."

81. On hearing these words of Vāsudeva, O Mohinī, the hairs stood on ends on the body of the king. He sang the following hymn :

The King prayed :

82. "O lover of Śrī, obeisance be to you, O lord of Śrī, Hail to the yellow-robed one; O bestower of fortune, lord of Śrī, O abode of Śrī, salutations to you, O abode of good fortune.

83. I bow down to the primordial Puruṣa, Īśāna, the lord of all, having faces all round; the greatest Deva devoid of any stigma; I bow down to the eternal one.

84. I bow down to him that is beyond all words, and all attributes, and devoid of existences as well as nonexistence. I salute to one that is unsmeared i. e. extremely pure, free from

attributes, subtle, omniscient and the conceiver and creator of all.

85. I pay obeisance to the lord holding conch, discus, iron club and threshing rod. I shall bow down to the lord who bestows boons and has the complexion of the petals of blue lotus.

86. I shall salute to Hṛṣīkeśa, Hari who lies down on his serpent couch, who stays in the milk ocean and who dispels all sins.

87. O lord of the chiefs of the Devas, I shall again pay obeisance to you, the lord and bestower of boons, Viṣṇu the lord of all the worlds and the immutable cause of liberation".

88. After eulogising the lord thus, after bowing down with palms joined in reverence, he laid himself prostrate on the ground again and said :

89-92. "O lord, if you are pleased with me, I shall choose this excellent boon. I wish to go to that region of yours which all these meditate upon :— viz. The Devas, Asuras, Yakṣas, Rākṣasas and the great serpents along with the Gandharvas, Siddhas, Kinnaras, Guhyakas, Sages; those blessed persons who are experts in different scriptural texts; who are endowed with renunciation and Yogic practice; who ponder over the real meaning of the Vedic texts and who know the path of salvation as well as others; who meditate upon that highest state. Your region is devoid of impurities, free from attributes and quiescent; learned men see it. It is very difficult of access; yet I wish to attain it through your grace."

The glorious Lord (Śrī Bhagavān) said :—

93. "May everything concerning you be auspicious and conducive to welfare. Attain everything as desired by you. Everything will happen as you desire, thanks to my grace. There is no doubt about this.

94. O excellent king, rule over your great kingdom without any break for ten thousand nine hundred years.

95-97. I, therefore, shall reveal to you that supreme state called Vijñeya which is the highest, divine, very difficult

to attain even by gods and demons; is perfect and bestower of all desired objects; quiescent; deserves to be kept as secret; unmanifest, unchanging, greater than the greatest, subtle, perfectly pure (unstained), devoid of attributes, eternal, perfectly free from worries and sorrows, transcending causal relationship. After attaining it you will get the highest bliss and reach the supreme goal.

98-99. May your fame spread here on the earth as long as the earth, sky, moon, sun, stars, seven oceans, Meru and other mountains exist here. It shall be steady as long as the eternal Devas stay in the heaven and everywhere.

100. Here is the Tīrtha named Indradyumna saras.[1] It is evolved out of the ghee used in the Yajña. By taking ablution even once in this, people will attain Śakra's world.

101. He who offers Piṇḍas here, on this auspicious shore of the ocean, shall redeem twentyone generations of his family and go to Śakra's world (Heaven).

102. As long as fourteen Indras reign he will continue there, worshipped by the Apsaras and sung about by Gandharvas with their harmonious notes. He will move about by means of the aerial chariot.

103-104a. On the southern bank of the lake, to the south-west side of it, there is a holy fig tree. Near it a Maṇḍapa (pavilion) will be erected. It will be covered with a cluster of Ketakī trees and surrounded by many trees.

104b-107a. On the fifth day in the bright half of the month of Āṣāḍha, when the constellation Maghā is there, and people will take us there for seven days and instal us in the pavilion with splendid courtesans expert in diverse types of dalliance and charming in their dances and songs. They will have chowries with gold handles and fans bedecked in jewels. The great ladies must be standing there fanning us.[2]

1. This is one of the important sub-Tīrthas forming the *Pañca-tīrthī* at Puruṣottama Kṣetra. It is near Guṇḍicā Mandira (or Janakpur) at a distance of about a mile and a half from Jagannātha temple.

2. VV. 104b-107a refer to the famous *Ratha Yātrā*.

107b-109a. Other people, the religious students, Sannyāsins, lifelong students of Veda, excellent Brāhmaṇas, householders, forest-hermits, Siddhas, and other twice-borns will be chanting hymns from Ṛk, Yajus and Sāman, the hymns consisting of many words and syllables. O king, they will eulogise Rāma and Keśava.

109b-110. Then after eulogising, bowing to and visiting the deity with great devotion, such a man shall stay in the glorious city of Hari for ten thousand divine years, being worshipped by Apsaras and sung about by Gandharvas with harmonious notes of music.

111. He sports there as an attendant of Hari with Keśava.

112. He shines with a jewelled necklace, in an aerial chariot of the refulgence of the sun. All that he desires is to abide in the excellent abode that is highly blessed.

113. After the merit of penance dwindles down, he comes here to the earth as a human being and is born as a Brāhmaṇa. He shall be the lord of crores of wealth. He shall certainly be a glorious master of the four Vedas.

114. After granting him this boon and stipulating the conditions thus, O gentle lady, Hari vanished along with Viśvakarman.

115. The king became delighted. His hairs began to stand on their ends. Thanks to the visit of Hari, he considered himself blessed and of having accomplished all objectives in life.

116-117. The king accompanied by his ministers and family priests carried the idols of Kṛṣṇa, Rāma and Subhadrā, the bestowers of boons, by means of chariots resembling aerial chariots, variously decorated with jewels and gold pieces. After carrying them along to the accompaniment of auspicious shouts of victory, he brought them to his city.

118-119. The intelligent king along with the family priests and ministers installed the idols in a splendid spot to the accompaniment of different musical instruments and the recitation of Vedic Mantras. After keeping them in a holy, charming and splendid spot for a few days, he formally got

these installed through the Brāhmaṇas on an auspicious Tithi when the constellation was favourable and on the whole the time was characterised as splendid, on an auspicious Muhūrta.

120-121. In accordance with the Śāstric injunctions and following the prescribed procedure to be observed and according to the precepts approved by the chief priest, the king performed every rite and gave the requisite monetary gift to the preceptor. The lord distributed wealth among the Ṛtviks and others in accordance with injunctions.

122. He installed those idols made by Viśvakarman, duly, in an excellent apartment in the palace.

123. He worshipped them duly with different fragrant flowers, gold, jewels, pearls as well as with different kinds of splendid clothes.

124-125. He granted large tracts of lands, cities and towns to the Brāhmaṇas. He ruled over the kingdom in a befitting manner. He performed sacrifices in various ways. He made over charitable gifts. Contented with everything, the king eschewed all possessions. He went over to the greatest place, the great region of Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER FIFTYFIVE

The Greatness of Puruṣottama (Contd.)

Mohini said :—

1. "O excellent Brāhmaṇa, what is that time when one should go to the shrine of Puruṣottama ? O bestower of Honour, what are the modes whereby the Pañcatīrthī[1] (the pilgrimage to the five holy centres) should be performed ?

1. This chapter deals with the *Pañca-Tīrthi* (five important sacred spots) at Jagannātha Purī.

2. Kindly tell me, everything, the benefit accruing from the holy ablution in each of these Tīrthas severally. Tell me the benefit of charitable gifts, visiting the deities separately".

Vasu said :—

3-4. "A devotee may eschew all food and perform a penance standing on a single foot for seventy thousand years controlling his sense-organs and suppressing his anger. But, if one observes fast for once on the twelfth day in the bright half of the month of Jyeṣṭha and visits Puruṣottama, one derives a superior benefit thereby.

5. Hence, O blessed lady, it is in the month of Jyeṣṭha that Puruṣottama is to be visited ardently by self-controlled men who desire to attain heavenly world.

6. The excellent man should duly make a pilgrimage to the Pañcatīrthī and visit Puruṣottama on the twelfth day in the bright half of the month of Jyeṣṭha.

7. Those who visit the eternal lord Puruṣottama on the Dvādaśī (twelfth) day attain the world of Viṣṇu. They never fall off therefrom.

8. Hence, O daughter of Brahmā, one should go there ardently in the month of Jyeṣṭha. After duly visiting the five holy Tīrthas (Pañcatīrthī) and (or after the due ablutions in the five sacred water reservoirs) Puruṣottama should be visited.

9. Even if the pilgrim is far off but he glorifies Puruṣottama with a pure soul and a delighted mind day by day, he too shall go to the city of Viṣṇu.

10. He who, with full concentration and faith, undertakes the pilgrimage of Kṛṣṇa, shall be liberated from all sins. That man shall attain Viṣṇu's world (Vaikuṇṭha).

11. By seeing from even a great distance the discus of Hari, stationed on the top of the palace (Temple) and bowing down to it, the man shall be liberated from his sins instantaneously.

12. O Mohinī, I shall now narrate the procedure for the holy ablution in the five Tīrthas (Pañcatīrthī). Listen.

If this is performed duly, the man shall become a favourite of Mādhava.

13. The clean and pure devotee should go to the Mārkaṇḍeya-Hrada[1] (the Pool of Mārkaṇḍeya). Facing the north he should plunge therein three times. He should repeat the following Mantra :—

14. "O Bhaganetraghna (he who destroyed the eye of Bhaga). O Tripurāri (the destroyer of the Tripuras), save me who am immersed in the ocean of worldly existence, who have been possessed by sins and have fallen senseless. Obeisance be to you.

15. Obeisance to Śiva, the quiescent god, to the destroyer of all sins. O lord of the Devas, I am taking bath. May my sins perish."

16. The intelligent pilgrim should stand in navel-deep water. With water and gingelly seeds he should duly perform the Tarpana rite of the Devas, sages, Pitṛs and others.

17-18. After the bath and Ācamana rite, the pilgrim should go to the temple of Śiva. After entering the shrine, he should circumambulate three times. With the Mūla Mantra* he should respectfully worship the deity Mārkaṇḍeyeśa. Repeating the Aghora Mantra** (as in Tait. Āraṇyaka 10.45.1 he should make obeisance and crave forgiveness.

19. "O three-eyed god, obeisance be to you. O moon-bedecked one, bow be to you. Redeem me, O lotus-eyed one (?) salute to you, O Mahādeva."

20. After thus taking ablution in the Mārkaṇḍeya Hrada and by visiting Śaṅkara, the man derives the benefit of (the performance of) ten horse-sacrifices.

21-22. Liberated from all sins; he goes to the world of Śiva. Till all the living beings are dissolved, he enjoys excellent pleasures there and comes back to this world. He is

1. Mārkaṇḍeya Hrada or pool is at a distance of 4 furlongs from the Jagannātha shrine. It is near the water pool called Candana (*Kalyāṇa* 31-1. P. 198).

*viz. *oṁ namaḥ śivāya* /

**Aghora Mantra* : *Om aghorebhyo ghorebhyo ghoratarebhyaḥ sarvebhyaḥ namastestu Rudra-rūpephyaḥ*

born as a highly learned Brāhmaṇa. Thereafter, he adopts the Yoga of Śaṅkara and attains salvation.

23. The devotee shall then go to the Kalpa tree (i.e. the Banyan tree) and circumambulate it three times. He should then worship that holy Banyan tree with great devotion, repeating the following Mantra :

24. "Oṃ obeisance to you of unmanifest form, to the great one, to the protector of one who bows down to you. Obeisance be to you, the holy Banyan tree growing seated in the great waters.

25. You resided in the banyan tree that is the abode of Hari, always during the Kalpa. O Nyagrodha tree dispel my sin. O Kalpa tree, obeisance be to you".*

26. By approaching the Kalpa tree** the Banyan tree, and by circumambulating it with devotion, the man instantaneously dispels the multitude of sins like a serpent casting off its slough.

27. O Mohinī, by coming under the shade of that Kalpa tree, a man shall dispel even the sin of the murder of a Brāhmaṇa. What then of other sins ?

28-29. O daughter of the creator, by visiting Viṣṇu in the form of the holy banyan tree that is born of Kṛṣṇa's limbs and that has the greatest brilliance of Brahman, and by bowing down to it, one attains more benefit than that of the Rājasūya sacrifice and the horse-sacrifice. He uplifts his family and goes to the world of Viṣṇu.

30. By bowing down to Vainateya (Garuḍa) stationed in front of Kṛṣṇa the devotee shall be liberated from all sins and he will go to the city of Viṣṇu.

31. He who sees Puruṣottama, Saṁkarṣaṇa and Subhadrā after visiting the banyan tree and Vainateya, attains the greatest goal (viz. Mokṣa).

32. After entering the shrine of Viṣṇu and circumambulating the deity three times, the pilgrim should worship and propitiate Saṁkarṣaṇa and Subhadrā with devotion.

*cf. BM. P. 57.13-14.

**The Banyan tree is styled as *Kalpa-vṛkṣa* in BM P. 57. 12; 60, 18.

33. "Obeisance to you, the deity named Haladhara (wielder of the ploughshare); Hail to you, O deity armed with the threshing pestle, salute to you, the lover of Revatī; obeisance to you O deity favourably disposed to the devotees.

34. Obeisance to you, O most powerful one among the strong persons; Bow to you the supporter of the earth; obeisance be to you, O enemy of Pralamba;[1] save me, O elder brother of Kṛṣṇa."

35-37. Thus propitiating Ananta, who is unconquerable, who is worshipped by the Devas; who has the shape of the peak of Kailāsa; whose face is as excellent and resplendent as the moon; who is clad in blue robes; whose head is formidable due to the hood; who is highly mighty; who is wielding the ploughshare and who is bedecked only with one earring—by worshipping the son of Rohiṇī thus with devotion, a man may attain the desired benefit. Liberated from all sins, he goes to Viṣṇu's world.

38-39. The learned devotee shall enjoy all pleasures there, till the ultimate dissolution of all living beings. When the merits are exhausted, he comes here in the world and is born in the family of Yogins. He becomes an excellent Brāhmaṇa and masters all the scriptural texts and their meanings. After attaining perfect knowledge, he attains liberation that is usually very difficult of access.

40. After worshipping Balarāma (Lit. one armed with the ploughshare) thus, the clever devotee should, with great concentration, worship Kṛṣṇa by means of the twelve-syllabled Mantra (viz. Oṁ namo Bhagavate Vāsudevāya).

41. Those self-possessed men who devoutly worship Puruṣottama always by means of twelve-syllabled Mantra attain salvation.

42. O daughter of Brahmā, neither the Devas, nor the Yogins nor the imbibers of the Soma juice attain that state which those who are devoted to the twelve-syllabled Mantra attain.

1. N. of a demon killed by Balarāma at Gokul, *vide* Bh. P. X. 57. 26.

43. Hence, the devotee should worship Kṛṣṇa, the preceptor of the universe, devoutly by means of scents, fragrant flowers etc., repeating that Mantra alone. After bowing to him, he should propitiate him :—

44. "Victory to you O Kṛṣṇa; O lord of the universe, be victorious; victory to you, O slayer of Cāṇūra and Keśin, O slayer of Kaṁsa, be victorious.

45. O deity with eyes resembling the petals of the lotus, be victorious; victory to you, O bearer of the discus and the iron club; O deity dark-complexioned like the blue cloud, be victorious; O bestower of all happiness, be victorious.

46. O lord worthy of being worshipped by the universe, be victorious; O destroyer of worldly existence (Saṁsāra) be victorious; O lord, O lord of the worlds, be victorious; victory to you, O deity bestowing the desired benefits.

47-48. O Puruṣottama, rescue me. I am immersed in the terrible ocean of worldly existence, though factually it is insignificant. Miseries constitute its foams; it is turbulent with furious temperament constituting its sharks and crocodiles. The mundane affairs are its flood of waters; the different kinds of ailments are its waves; it is impassable due to the whirlpool of delusion."

49-52. By visiting Puruṣottama, with palms joined in reverence and by prostrating oneself flat, like a staff (before him) one attains, O Mohinī, the benefit of thousand of horse-sacrifices. By propitiating the lord of the Devas (the devotee attains great benefits); the lord who is the bestower of boons; who is favourably disposed towards the devotees; who is the destroyer of all sins, who grants all desired benefits, that lord Kṛṣṇa has two arms and plump shoulders. His eyes are as large as the petals of the lotus. His chest is large; his arms are mighty; his face is splendid. He is clad in yellow robes. He holds the conch, discus and iron club in his hands. He is bedecked with crown and armlets. He is endowed with all auspicious characteristics. He is adorned with garlands of sylvan flowers.

53. By visiting and bowing to Kṛṣṇa, a man attains that benefit which has been glorified in the case of ablution in the Tīrthas and the offering of charitable gifts.

54. By bowing down to Lord Kṛṣṇa, a man attains that benefit which is linked up with the Vedas and Yajñas.

55. By visiting and bowing down to Kṛṣṇa, a man attains that benefit which results from all charitable gifts, holy rites and observances.

56. By visiting and bowing down to Kṛṣṇa, a man attains that benefit which is reputed to result from celibacy duly observed.[1]

57. By visiting and bowing down to Kṛṣṇa, a man attains that benefit which is cited as the benefit of the life of a householder duly practised.

58. By visiting and bowing down to Kṛṣṇa, a man attains that benefit which is glorified as being yielded by dwelling in the forest to one who practises Vānaprastha stage of life.

59. By visiting and bowing down to Kṛṣṇa, a man attains that benefit which has been cited as resulting from the due observance of the life of an ascetic Sannyāsin.

60. O beautiful, woman, of what avail is much talk about its greatness ? By visiting Kṛṣṇa with devotion, a man attains salvation which is so difficult to attain.

61-62. He will be liberated from the sins originating since crores of Kalpas. He will be endowed with the greatest glory and all attributes. After uplifting twentyone generations of his family, the man shall go to the city of Viṣṇu by means of an aerial chariot of great brilliance richly equipped with all desirable things.

63. Then for the duration of a hundred Kalpas, he will be enjoying pleasures sweet to the mind. He will be sporting about with Gandharvas and Apsaras like the four-armed Viṣṇu.

64. Falling off from that world, he comes down here and is born in the excellent family of Brāhmaṇas. He becomes omniscient. He knows everything. He eschews malice and jealous rivalry.

1. VV. 56-59 affirm the superiority of merely visiting Puruṣottama to the life-long observance of all Āśramas (stages of life).

65. He will be engaged in his own righteous duties. He will be quiescent and charitable. He will be engaged in the welfare of all living beings. After acquiring perfect knowledge pertaining to Viṣṇu, he shall attain liberation.

66. Thereafter, bowing down to Subhadrā with palms folded in reverence and with the following Mantra, the devotee should propitiate Subhadrā, who is favourably disposed towards her devotees, O daughter of god Brahmā.

67. "Obeisance to you, O omnipresent goddess; obeisance to you the bestower of auspiciousness and happiness. Protect me O Kātyāyanī, you who are possessed of eyes resembling the petals of a lotus."*

68-70. Thus propitiating that goddess, the mother of the universe, Subhadrā, the sister of Baladeva, the auspicious bestower of boons, the man shall go to the city of Viṣṇu by means of an aerial chariot that can go wherever he desires to go. After sporting about there like a god till the time of final dissolution of the universe, he will take birth as a human being. He shall then be a Brāhmaṇa who knows the Vedas. After acquiring the Yoga of Hari, he certainly attains liberation.

71. After coming out from the shrine, the man shall have the feeling of satisfaction (of having obtained his life's objects). After bowing down again to the deity in the shrine, the devotee should depart from there with great concentration.

72. Even though he has disappeared, one should bow down to the place where the sapphire idol of Viṣṇu is buried in sand. The devotee who bows down to this place shall go to the city of Viṣṇu.

73. O queen, the lord with half of his body being that of a lion (viz. Narasiṁha) is present there always. It was he who uplifted Hiraṇyakaśipu. He is identical with all Devas.

74. There is no doubt in this that by visiting that lord Nṛhari and by devoutly bowing to him, O splendid lady, the man is liberated from all sins.

*Cf. BM. P. 57.58.

75. Those men who are devotees of Narasiṁha on this earth have no sin attached to them at all. They derive the benefit as desired by them.

76. Since he grants the benefit of all Puruṣārthas, viz. virtue, wealth, love and liberation, the devotee shall by all means resort to Narasiṁha.

77. Hence, O daughter of Brahmā, the devotee should always devoutly worship the highly powerful lord of animals (Nara-Siṁha), the bestower of all desired benefits.

78-80. (All the people)—the Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, Śūdras, women, Antyajas (outcastes) and others shall, by worshipping with devotion, the most excellent of all gods, possessing the physical form of a lion, be liberated from inauspicious misery originating from crores of births. They attain all desired things such as the state of being a god, of being the lord of the immortal beings, the state of the lord of wealth and the state of being Yakṣas and Vidyādharas. O beautiful woman, he bestows these and other things.

81. O daughter of the creator, listen to the powers of Narasiṁha, the unconquered deity, the incomprehensible god, the bestower of worldly pleasures and salvation.

82. O lady of good rites, who is competent to recount fully the attributes of that deity half of whose body is that of a lion ? I shall tell you succinctly.

83. There is no doubt about this that, thanks to his grace, one shall realise those Siddhis (super-human powers) both divine and human, that are heard about.

84. Thanks to the grace of that lord, one will have unimpeded movement in the heaven, mortal world, nether worlds, firmament, water, landmass or on a mountain.

85. O blessed lady, in this world consisting of the mobile and immobile beings, there is nothing that is unachievable to lord Narasiṁha who is always sympathetic to the devotees.

86. I shall narrate the procedure that will facilitate devotees and whereby the deity half of whose body is leonine (i.e. Narasiṁha) is delighted.

87a. The real nature of that lord is unknown even to the Devas and Asuras.

87b-89. The leader of the Sādhakas (aspirant devotees) sustains himself by means of vegetables, roots, fruits, barley grains, oil cakes, powdered fried grains or milk. He wears only a lion cloth or woven Kāśa grass. With the sense organs fully conquered, he meditates on the lord seated in a secluded spot, the confluence of rivers, the mountains, the Siddhakṣetra (the sacred places of the Siddhas), in a barren land or in the hermitage of Narasiṁha.

90-91a. He himself instals the idol and performs the worship in accordance with the injunctions. There is no doubt about this that, even if the Sādhaka is defiled by subsidiary sins or great sins, he is liberated from them.

91b-93. The devotee should circumambulate and worship Narasiṁha with scents, fragrant flowers, incense etc. After bowing down the head to the lord, he shall offer the Jāti flowers smeared with camphor and sandal-paste on the head of Narasiṁha. Thereby, Siddhi is realised. In none of these acts or (bestowing of Siddhis) the lord is thwarted.

94-95. Brahmā, Rudra and other gods are not competent to cross him. What then is the case of Dānavas in the world, and of the Siddhas, Gandharvas, human beings, Vidyādharas, Yakṣas, Kinnaras and serpents ? All those divine beings are annihilated by the splendour of divine fire. (of Narasiṁha).

96-97. By performing the Japa once, the devotee shall smite all harassing persons by the flame of fire. The performance of Japa for three times of the Divine Narasiṁha Kavaca (mystical syllables protective like an armour) shall protect one from Daityas Dānavas, goblins, ghosts, demons as well as other enemies. The Kavaca-Mantras repeated thrice cannot be split by the Devas and suras.

98. Lord Narasiṁha of great strength and exploits, O highly blessed lady, always protects the devotees within twelve Yojanas (1 Yojana = 4 krośas or 8 miles).

99-100. The devotee should thereafter go to the opening of the cave and fast there for three nights. By means of the Palāśa twigs, he should ignite the fire and perform Homas with the Palāśa twigs soaked in Trimadhu (honey, ghee, sugar) for twenty thousand times. O lady of lotus-like eyes, a cart shall come into the view of the Sādhaka.

101-102. Then, the Kavallīvivara (the opening of Kavallī[1] (?) shall be revealed instantaneously. The learned devotee should unhesitatingly enter the opening. As the cart proceeds, darkness and delusion perish. O Mohinī, wide highway is seen there.

103. Remembering Narasiṁha, he should enter the nether worlds. After going there, the pure devotee should perform the Japa of the immutable Narasiṁha.

104. Thereafter, thousands of women shall come out of the city with lutes, chowries etc. in their hands and speak words of welcome to him.

105. O lady of beautiful eyes, they will grasp the leading Sādhaka by the hand and take him into the city. They will make him drink divine Rasâyana (elixir of life).

106. The moment he drinks, he will be endowed with a divine body. He will become very strong. He will be sporting about with divine virgins until the dissolution of the universe.

107. (?) With a different body, he is taken to Vāsudeva.[2] When these virgins do not appeal to him, he will come out of that place.

108-109. (Through the grace of Narasiṁha) the excellent Sādhaka shall obtain a magic tablet, trident, sword, yellow pigment, jewel, mercury, elixir and the collyrium and the sandals. He shall grasp the Vidyâs (lores) of Guṭikā (magic pills)

1. *kavallī* is not traced to any Sk. Dictionary. The text in the NP. here: *tato viśet tu niḥśaṅkaṁ kavallī-vivaram budhaḥ* / is obscure. *Brahma P.* 58.35a reads : *tato viśet tu niḥśaṅkaṃ Kavacī vivaraṁ budhaḥ* 'The wise man who has armoured himself with Narasiṁha *kavaca* should enter fearlessly.

2. The text is corrupt. This verse in the *Brahma P.* 58.40 reads: (*bhinna-deho Vāsudeve līyate nātra Saṁśayaḥ*) "There is no doubt that though his body is different, he is absorbed in Vāsudevu."

Manaḥśilā (red arsenic), Kṛṣṇāñjali (handful of Kṛṣṇa?)* Maṇḍala**(?) (kamaṇḍalu-water-pot) Akṣasūtra (string of rosary) and the sixth Sañjīvanī) the lifegiver). i.e. the lore of restoring a dead man to life).

110-113. It is as though the lord in the heart is enveloped by the blazing flames of the fire. Placed but once, it burns all sins originating from crores of births. Having (mastered) the mystic lore (Siddha-Vidyā) and Śāstras (scriptures), the lord of Śādhakas, if places in his heart the fire enveloped with flames and burning sparks only once, it burns down all of his sins and evils perpetrated in a crore of births. Placed in poison, it destroys poison; kept on the body, it dispels even leprosy. If one kills a foetus and commits similar sins and places that divine fire on his person, he is absolved of the sins (by that divine fire). One should think of the blazing deity when overwhelmed by great evil planets. The evil and terrible planets begin to cry and they perish quickly. When the amulet is tied round the necks of children it is a perpetual protection.

114. It certainly destroys evil spirits such as the Gaṇḍa, Piṇḍaka and Kṛtyās. In order to dispel ailments, the devotee should perform Homa with the sacrificial twigs, ghee and milk.

115. If this is performed during the three Sandhyās (i.e. dawn, dusk and midday) for the period of a month, it will destroy all ailments. I do not find anything in the world consisting of the mobile and immobile beings, anything that is unachievable to this Tattva (principle or lore).

116. By worshipping the lord of beasts alone for hundred and eight times, the devotee certainly attains all those Siddhis whichever he may desire.

117-119. In the ant-hill, in the cremation ground, and in the crossroads, the devotee should smear the oil mixed with red sandal paste and cow's milk. With this paste he should make an idol of the lion six Aṅgulas in length; should then write (the

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*An obvious error for *kṛṣṇājina* vide the same verse repeated in the *Brahma P.* 58-42.

**The *Brahma P. ibid* reads *kamaṇḍalum*. 'Maṇḍala' in the NP. is obscure. Hence the reading of the Br. P. is adopted.

Mantra) on the leaf of Bhūrja with Rocana (yellow pigment). This leaf with Mantra should be tied to (the idol of Narasiṁha). He should then perform the Japa of the Mantra for unlimited number of times after worshipping it near a water reservoir."

120. By the time the devotee with all his sense-organs controlled, performs the Japas for seven days, the whole earth shall be showered with water. Within a Muhūrta the earth will be flooded with water.

121-122. Alternately, the devotee should sit on the top of pure tree and worship Narasiṁha. By performing a hundred and eight Japas of the Tattva (Narasiṁha Mantra), the devotee shall ward off that rain. After placing (the idol) in a cage the excellent Sādhaka shall whirl it. Within a Mahūrta a great violent gust of wind shall blow.

123-124. He can ward it off once again by sprinkling the idol with water charged with the Mantra seven times. If the aspirant were to put that idol under the ground at the threshold of anyone the whole of his family shall be exterminated. When it is taken out, it shall accord peace. Hence O daughter of Brahmā, one shall always worship it with devotion.

125-126. By visiting, eulogising, bowing to and worshipping Nṛhari, the lord of beasts who has great prowess and who bestows all desired benefits, O splendid lady, men obtain kingdom, heavenly pleasure, and liberation (from saṁsāra) which is very difficult to get. By seeing Narasiṁha, a man shall achieve the desired benefits.

127-128a. He shall be liberated form all sins. He shall go to the world of Viṣṇu. By visiting that lord having the leonine body, with great devotion even for once, the devotee is liberated from all sins, whether physical, verbal or mental in origin.

128b-130a. A man shall necessarily remember that lord in the following circumstances : When there is a war; when there is any difficulty; when in misery, when afflicted by thieves, tigers, etc., in the forest, when there is doubt about the safety of life, when oppressed by poison, fire or water, when there is fear from the king etc., during the day of battle, when one is afflicted

by evil planets ailments etc., By remembering the lord, the man is liberated from difficulties.

130b-131a. Just as dense darkness perishes at the rise of the sun, so also all torments perish when the lord is visited.

131b-132. When Narasiṁha is delighted the devotee achieves the Guṭikās (Mystic pills), Añjana (magical collyrium), the Pādalepa (unguent for the foot) and the elixir of life, enabling one to go anywhere. He achieves other desired benefits too. If a man worships Nṛhari meditating on other desired results, he shall undoubtedly attain those objects."

CHAPTER FIFTYSIX

The Greatness of Puruṣottama (Contd.)

Vasu said :

1-2. "O blessed lady, listen to another group of Tīrtha in the holy centre of Puruṣottama. It is highly meritorious. By the mere sight, it destroys sins. By visiting Vāsudeva termed Ananta with devotion and by bowing down to him, a man shall be liberated from all sins, he shall attain the greatest region (viz. Vaikuṇṭha)

3. By taking bath in the Śvetagaṅgā[1] and by visiting Śveta-Mādhava as well as Matsya-Mādhava, the devotee goes to Śveta Dvīpa (the abode of Nārāyaṇa).

4-7a. Viṣṇu's devotees of great concentration and purity shall attain heaven by visiting the pure deity which resembles snow in complexion; who bears conch, discus and iron club; who is endowed with all auspicious characteristics; whose chest has the mark of Śrīvatsa, who is delighted, who has four arms, whose chest is covered with garlands of sylvan flowers ; who

1. Śveta-Gaṅgā pool is on the way to the sea (from Jagannātha Temple). The two Mādhava shrines (Matsya and Śveta) are near it.

wears coronet and armlets; whose garments are yellow in colour; whose shoulders are plum and who is bedecked in earrings. By touching the leading king, Śvetagāṅgeya (god Śveta-Mādhava), even with the tip of a Kuśa grass they go to heaven.

7b-9a. He who sees this idol of lustre called Mādhava, that resembles conch and cow's milk and that destroys all sins, he who bows to that idol with eyes resembling lotuses even but once, with devotion and eschewing worldly desires is honoured in the world of Viṣṇu.

9b-10. For many Manvantaras, he enjoys extensive pleasures as he pleases, along with the Devas, surrounded by Divine virgins, sung in praise by the Gandharvas and worshipped by Siddhas and Vidyādharas.

11. Falling off from these, he comes to the mortal world and is born as a Brāhmaṇa knowing the Vedas and the Vedāṅgas. He will be intelligent, long-lived and enjoying worldly pleasures.

12. He will be richly endowed with elephants, horses, chariots and other vehicles. He will be pure and blessed with wealth and food-grains. He shall be handsome and very fortunate. He will have sons and grandsons.

13. He goes again unto Puruṣottama on the seashore at the root of the holy Banyan tree. After abandoning the body and remembering Hari he shall go to the region of calmness and peace. (Mokṣa)

14-16. By visiting Śvetamādhava and Matsya-mādhava near him and by bowing down to him with purity, the devotee should leave off all distressing features. When formerly the whole universe was vast sheet of water, the lord had at the outset assumed the form of a fish of the Rohita type. It was to redeem the Vedas (from the demon who had stolen them) that the lord thus stationed himself on the surface of Rasātala. Thinking about the earth, the fish established itself there. Then the Matsya (fish) assumed the form of a youth. That is Matsya Mādhava.

17. He goes to that highly excellent place where lord Hari is present himself. In due course of time, he comes down here and shall be the king on the surface of the earth.

18. By resorting to Matsya-Mādhava, a man will be invincible. He will be a liberal donor, enjoyer of pleasures, a warrior, a devotee of Viṣṇu and true to his word.

19-20a. Afterwards, by being enlightened in the Yoga leading to Hari, he shall attain liberation. The greatness of Matsyamādhava has been recounted by me to you. On seeing him, O daughter of Brahmā, the devotee shall attain all desires.

20b-22. I shall now describe the rite of Mārjana in the sacred and auspicious pool of water called Mārkaṇḍeyahrada. The ablution in the Mārkaṇḍeyahrada at all times is praised. It is an ancient rite to plunge into it with a singleminded devotion. Particularly on the Caturdaśī day, the ablution is destructive of all sins. Similarly, the ablution in the ocean at all times is praised.

23-24a. Particularly, on the full moon day, (the ablution in the ocean) makes one attain the benefit of a horse-sacrifice. On the full Moon day in the month of Jyeṣṭha, when the constellation is also Jyeṣṭhā, the devotee shall particulary visit that king of holy centres which is exceedingly splendid.

24b-25. He should have pure and holy Sāttvaic feelings physically, verbally and mentally, and his mind should not be directed towards anything else. He should be liberated from all mutually clashing opposites. He should be devoid of passions and malicious rivalry. He should circumambulate the beautiful Kalpa-tree, the banyan tree, where Janārdana himself abides.

26-27a. With great concentration, he should circumambulate it three times. On seeing it, the sin originating from seven births perishes. O Mohinī, he attains an extensive merit and his desired goal.

27b-28. I shall mention to you its names in the different Yugas. The names of the banyan tree in the Kṛta and other Yugas have been glorified as follows: (They know them as) Vaṭa, Vaṭeśvara, Śānta and Purāṇa Puruṣa.

29. In the Kṛta and other Yugas, the girth of the banyan tree has been respectively one Yojana, three-fourths of a Yojana, half a Yojana and one-fourth of a Yojana.

30. After bowing down to the banyan tree, repeating the Mantra mentioned above, the devotee should go to the south at

a distance of three hundred Dhanus (bows or twelve hundred hastas or cubits).

31. It is the place where the sign, the beautiful portals of heaven, become visible within the ocean, a log of wood equipped with all auspicious attributes has been drawn.

32. He should bow down to it, worship it and then stand by. He shall then be liberated from all the mulitudes of sins, effects of evil planets and other inauspicious things.

33. Formerly, Ugrasena looked at the ocean through heavenly portals. He went there. With purity of word, mind and deed, he meditated on the supreme Nārāyaṇa and performed the Ācamana rite.

34. Thereafter, the devotee should fix the eight-syllabled Mantra on the hand as well as on the body.[1] The Mantra is what learned men utter viz. 'Om namo Nārāyaṇāya'.

35. What purpose is served by many Mantras causing the richness of the mind ? The Mantra "Namo Narāyaṇāya" is that which achieves all objects.

36. Āpaḥ (waters) are glorified as Nārā since they are the offsprings of Nara (Man). They were the former abode of Viṣṇu. Hence Viṣṇu is remembered as Nārāyaṇa.

37. The Vedas are devoted to Nārāyaṇa. The Brāhmaṇas are devoted to Nārāyaṇa. Perfect knowledge is concerned with Nārāyaṇa. Holy rites are related to Nārāyaṇa.

38. Dharma (virtue) is concerned with Nārāyaṇa. The penance is connected with Nārāyaṇa, charitable gift is concerned with Nārāyaṇa; holy rites are related to Nārāyaṇa.

39. The worlds are concerned with Nārāyaṇa, the Devas are devoted to Nārāyaṇa; the Nitya rites (routine holy rites) are related to Nārāyaṇa. The region (to be reached) is concerned with Nārāyaṇa.

40. (All the elements are concerned with Nārāyaṇa, such as the earth is devoted to Nārāyaṇa; the water is related to Nārāyaṇa; the fire element is concerned with Nārāyaṇa; the firmament is devoted to Nārāyaṇa.

1. VV. 34-54 disclose the powerful influence of the Pañcarātra system on the NP.

41. The Vāyu (wind god) is devoted to Nārāyaṇa; the mind is concerned with Nārāyaṇa: the Ahaṁkāra (Ego) and the Buddhi (Intellect) both of these are of the nature of Nārāyaṇa.

42. The things of the past, present and future, whatever is termed as Jīva (living individual), the gross, the subtle and the huge, everything is of the nature of Nārāyaṇa.

43. O Mohinī, I do not see anything here different than Nārāyaṇa; this world consisting of the visible and the invisible, the mobile, and immobile beings is pervaded by him.

44-45. Waters constitute the abode of Viṣṇu, the ocean is the lord of waters. Hence, he is in the waters. Particularly, at the time of ablution, the devotee should worship Nārāyaṇa the dispeller of sins. He should remember Nārāyaṇa and meditate on him. He should then perform the Nyāsa rite on the hand and on the body.

46-47. He should fix the syllable Oṁ on the left hip, the syllable 'Nā' on the right hip, the syllable 'Rā' in the umbilical region, the syllable 'Ya' in the left arm and the syllable 'Ṇā' in the right arm. He should fix the syllable 'Ya' on the head and then fix beneath, above, sideways, in the heart behind and in front.

48-50. The learned devotee should meditate on Nārāyaṇa and thereafter begin the Kavaca (protective Mantras of mystic syllables) : In the east of me may Govinda protect; may Madhusūdana protect me in my south; may lord Śrīdhara protect me in my west; may Keśava protect me in the north; may Viṣṇu protect me in the south-east; may the unchanging Mādhava protect me in the southwest; may Hṛṣīkeśa protect me in the north-west; may Vāmana protect me in the north-east; may the Boar protect me in the earth and may Trivikrama protect me in the upward direction.

51. After assigning the Kavaca to various parts thus, the devotee should contemplate about himself. thus—"I am lord Nārāyaṇa. the wielder of the conch, discus and iron club."

52-54. After meditating on the Ātman thus, the devotee should repeat this Mantra : "You are the fire-god, O lord of bipeds; you are the discharger of the semen ; you are the

igniter of love's fire. You are the chief of all living beings and individual souls; you are the unchanging lord; you are the Araṇi of the nectar; O lord of waters, you are the source of origin of the Devas; dispel my sins, O king of Tīrthas obeisance be to you".

After uttering thus duly, he should perform the rite of ablution according to injunctions.

55. Otherwise, O daughter of Brahmā, the bath there is not commended. The devotee should perform the rite of ablution and Mārjana (sprinkling) within water with those Mantras the deities of which are the waters.

56-57a. Then he should repeat the Mantra of Aghamarṣaṇa. O gentle lady, just as the horse-sacrifice is a Yajña that dispels sins, so also the hymn of Aghamarṣaṇa[1] dispels all sins.

57b-58. He should then come out of water and wear clean washed clothes. He should then restrain his breath, perform Ācamana rite and worship the sun by way of Sandhyā. He should then offer in the upward direction a handful of water and flowers.

59. With the arms raised up, he should worship the sun by means of the Mantras his symbols. Thereafter, he should repeat the holy and divine Gāyatrī Mantra hundred and eight times.

60. Standing there with concentration, he should repeat other Mantras also pertaining to the sun. He should then circumambulate and bow to the sun and be seated.

61-62a. He should then face the east and recite Veda-Mantras as Svādhyāya. Then the Tarpaṇa rite of the Devas, human beings, sages and the Pitṛs of his own family should be duly performed by the devotee who is the knower of names and Gotra. He should perform the Tarpaṇa rite with water mixed with sesame seeds, according to prescribed injunction and with concentration of mind.

62b-64a. During Śrāddha and the Havana (oblations to fire) rites the devotee should perform the same with a single

1. *Aghamarṣaṇa* hymns (RV. X. 190. 1-3) are supposed to wash off sins of men.

hand. The rite of Tarpaṇa shall be performed with both the hands. This is the standing injunction. He should perform the rite with the right hand supported by the left (?) "May they be satiated". He shall utter these words clearly uttering the name and the Gotra but silently otherwise.

64b-65a. If anyone out of delusion performs the Tarpaṇa rite for the Pitṛs, by means of gingelly seeds clinging to the body, it is as though the Tarpaṇa rite has been performed by means of skin, flesh, blood and bones.

65b-67a. The water libation will not reach the Pitṛs, if the devotee stands in water and offers on to the ground or if he stands on the ground and offers it into the water. The water should be offered standing on the ground and on to the ground. What is not offered on the ground does not reach (the Pitṛs). The earth has been given by Brahmā as the imperishable (eternal) place of the Pitṛs. Hence (the libation) should be given only there, by the person who wishes for the pleasure of the Pitṛs.

67b-68a. The earth is born out of water; the water is present therein and gets dissolved in the earth. Hence, one should offer water on the ground.

68b,c. He should spread the Kuśa grass on the ground and invoke the Pitṛs or the Devas by their respective Mantras. In respect of the Devas, the tips of the Kuśa grass shall be towards the east, and in the case of the Pitṛs (manes) they shall be towards the south.

CHAPTER FIFTYSEVEN

The Glory of Puruṣottama : The Procedure of Worship[1]

Vasu said :

1-3. After performing the rite of Tarpaṇa to gods, sages, Pitṛs and others, the pilgrim should silently perform Ācamana (religious sipping of water). O daughter of Brahmā, he should draw a square of the side of a Hasta (a cubit of about eighteen inches). Is should be beautiful and should have four entrances. It represents the city of Puruṣottama on the shore of the great ocean. In its middle, he should draw the mystic diagram of a lotus with eight petals and the pericarp. O Mohinī, he should draw the mystic diagram and worship in it, Lord Nārāyaṇa, the unborn eternal deity, in accordance with the same injunctions as in the case of eight-syllabled Mantra.

4. Henceforth, I shall explain fully to you the excellent mode of purification of the physical body. The* syllable Kṣa in the company of the syllable Ra is red and should be thought of in the heart.

5. On his head, he should think of the syllable 'E' as stationed in the middle of the dice of the moon and having three blazing 'Śikhās' burning down the heaps of the sins of the world.

6. It is white in colour and it showers nectar flooding the earth**. The devotee who has shaken off sins, thus shall thereafter become one with a divine body.

1. This chapter gives the application of Pañca-rātra Āgama to the worship of Purusottama. The esoteric application of the mantra *Oṁ namo Nārāyaṇāya* and *Viṣṇave namaḥ* to the various parts of one's person (technically known as *Nyāsa*) is an essential part of Tantrism.

This chapter is practically the same as the *Brahma P.* Ch. 61. Thus the *Brahma purāṇa* 61.1-12 are the same as the NP 57.1-12; so also *Brahma P.* 61.23-58 and the NP. 57.23-58 are identical but with the difference of few readings here and there.

*Here *Brahma P.* V. 46 reads :

akāraṁ hṛdaye dhyātvā cakra-rekhā-samanvitam /

The *Anāhata Cakra* is presumed to be at the heart. But neither *Kṣa* nor *Ra* or *A* form the *bījas* and the 'Petals' of that *Çakra.*

**The qualities of blazing and burning sins may be those of the syllable *Kṣa,* in case the first half of verse 6 is taken along with the 5th verse).

7. The learned devotee, should then fix the eight syllabled Mantra in the body as well as in the Ātman. He should fix it beginning with the left foot and proceed gradually.

8. With the Mūla mantra, the aspirant should perform the rite of purification of the hand. The Nyāsa rite shall have five subsidiary limbs and four manifestations of Viṣṇu.

9. He should fix each of the syllables separately on the fingers. The syllable OM is the earth. He should fix it on the left foot. It is white in colour.

10. The syllable *na* is dark-coloured. It is the Bhuvaḥ (the world). It is fixed on the right foot. They call the syllable *mo* as Kāla (Time) alone. It must be fixed in the left hip.

11. The syllable *nā* (which is the previous seed*) is established in the southern right side. They call *rā* the refulgence (the Fire element) and it is stabilised in the umbilical region.

12. The syllable *ya* is of gaseous nature and it has resorted to the left shoulder. The syllable *ṇā* shall always be known to have been stablished in the right shoulder.

13-14. The syllable *ya* is stationed on the head, where the worlds are also stabilised. After fixing Oṁkāra in the heart, the syllable 'vi' on the head, the syllable 'ṣṇa' on the tuft and the syllable 've' in the Kavaca (coat of mail). He shall fix *na* in the eyes. The syllable *maḥ* is said to be the 'Astra' 'miraculous weapon'.

15. The (deity) Vāsudeva is of white colour. It is fixed in the forehead. (He is stationed on the forehead) The deity Saṁkarṣaṇa is red. He is fixed in the mouth. He resembles the fire and the sun.

16. (The manifestation called 'Pradyumna' is yellow in colour and is assigned in the heart and the Vyūha (manifestation) known as Aniruddha is stationed at the sex-organ. Hari thus pervades all limbs. The Almighty one is worshipped thus in his four-fold manifestations (Vyūhas)

***Br. P. 57.11a reads: *Sarva-bīja.*

17. Viṣṇu is present in front of me; Keśava abides behind me; Govinda is present on the right side; Madhusūdana is present on the left side.

18. Vaikuṇṭha is present above, and Varāha (the Divine Boar) on the ground. Mādhava is present in all those intermediate quarters between the main directions.

19. My protection is effected by Narasiṁha whether I go or stay, whether I keep awake or am asleep. I am identical with Vāsudeva.

20. After becoming identical with Viṣṇu thus, the devotee should begin the rite. He should combine all the principles with the Deva, just as is done in the case of the physical body.

21. That which ends with the syllable 'pha' is cited to be auspicious and destructive of all obstacles. He shall think of the spheres of the sun, moon and fire.

22-23. In the middle of the lotus of the internal side of the cosmos, the devotee shall fix Viṣṇu. Thereafter, he should mentally think of the excellent lustre, Praṇava (om) seated in the pericarp, the eternal being of the form of brilliance. Thereafter, he should perform the Nyāsa* rite of the eight-syllabled Mantra in due order.

24. The worship by means of that Mantra in the state of analysis and synthesis (Vyasta-Samasta) ** is remembered to be great : He should then worship the eternal lord by means of the twelve-syllabled Mantra.

25. He should then retain in the heart the immense being with four arms and lustre equal to that of crores of suns.

26-29. After thinking about the great Yoga, he should invoke the following deities in due order :

(The Mantra for invocation) : "O Nārāyaṇa, may these Devas, the bestowers of boons come in front of me viz. he who has assumed the form of the Fish, Narasiṁha and Vāmana."

**Nyāsa* is the assignment of the various parts of the body to different deities (or syllables of Mantras). It is accompanied with particular Mantra, syllable or prayer to corresponding gesticulations.

***Literally : *Vyasta*='inherent in or pervading *all the several parts* of anything,' while *Samasta*='inherent in or pervading *the whole of* anything.

(The Mantra for offering a seat.) "Sumeru is the pedestal for your feet. The seat has been made in the form of the lotus. O Madhusūdana, stay behind for the benefit of all living beings". (The Mantra for Pādya) "O eternal lord Padmanābha, the Pādya (water for washing feet) is offered at your feet. O Viṣṇu, O deity with the eyes like the petals of the lotus, O Madhusūdana, accept it.

(The Mantra for Madhuparka and Arghya) 'O great lord, accept Madhuparka prepared by me. Accept it in the company of Brahmā and others. O Puruṣottama, accept the Arghya devoutly offered by me.

30-33. (The Mantra for Ācamanīya) : "The water of the Mandākinī (the Gaṅgā) is auspicious. It dispels all sins. Accept that as the water for the rite of Ācamana. It has been offered by me with great devotion."

(The Mantra for bath) : "You are the water, the earth, the fiery (element) and the wind (element). I am bathing you with the water that alone supports the worlds."

(The Mantra for offering clothes) : "May these two clothes be accepted; they are woven with the divine yarn; they have the colour of the Yajña and they have the lustre and the glitter of gold."

(The Mantra for smearing the Lord with unguents) : "O Keśava, neither your body nor your activities do I know perfectly.

34-36. May the unguent offered by me be accepted and smeared." (The Mantra for offering a sacred thread) : "The sacred thread which has been made of three turns by the Lotus-born god with Mantras of Ṛk, Yajus and Sāman and is equipped with the knot called Sāvitrī, has been dedicated to you."

(The Mantra for decorating with ornaments) : "O Mādhava, the ornaments consisting of divine jewels and having the lustre of the fire and the sun will make your limbs splendid-looking".

The Mantra for waving lights) : "O lord of the luminaries, you alone are the fiery refulgence of the sun and the moon of the lightning and the fire. May this light be accepted."

37. (The Mantra for offering incense) : "This fragrant vegetable juice divine and presented along with sweat scents is for you. May this incense offered to you devoutly by me be accepted."

38. (The Mantra for offering food as Naivedya) : "Tasty cooked food of four kinds has been offered to you with devotion. It has six tastes in the varieties of dishes. O Keśava, this is the Naivedya unto you."

39-41. The devotee should perform the Nyāsa in the petal in the east; that of Saṁkarṣaṇa in the petal in the south; that of Pradyumna in the petal in the west, and that of Anuruddha in the petal in the north. He should perform the Nyāsa of the Varāha incarnation in the south-east; that of Narasiṁha in the south-west; that of Mādhava in the north-west, that of Trivikrama in the north-east. He shall perform the Nyāsa of Garuḍa, in front of the lord of the eight-syllabled Mantra.

42-43. He should fix the discus on the left side and the conch on the right side. The great iron club also should be fixed on the right hand side of the lord. Then the scholarly devotee should fix the bow to the left of the lord. The divine quiver shall be fixed on the right hand side and the sword on the left.

44-45. After fixing Śrī to the south side, the devotee should fix Puṣṭi to the north side and the Vana-mālā (the garland of sylvan flowers) as well as the Śrīvatsa mark and Kaustubha gem in front of the Lord. He should fix the heart etc. in the four quarters beginning with the east. Thereafter, he shall fix the weapou of the lord of the Devas in the corner.

46-48a. He should worship the following deities (the guardians of the quarters) : Viz. Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirṛti, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Dhanada (Kubera), Īśāna, Ananta and Brahmā. He should worship them with their respective Mantras (in the respective quarters) and below as well as above. By worshipping thus the lord of the Devas, Janārdana, stationed in the Mystic diagram, the man shall attain cherished desires.

48b-50a. He who sees this Janārdana stationed in the mystic diagram worshipped in accordance with this injunction, shall enter the unchanging Viṣṇu. He, by whom Keśava is worshipped at least once in this manner shall surmount (the difficulties of bath, old age and death and attain the region of Viṣṇu.

50b-51a. Śvetadvīpa is glorified for the daily residence of that person who devoutly remembers Nārāyaṇa continuously and diligently.

51b-52a. That Mantra which begins with 'Oṁ Namaḥ' (Lit : that which contains 'Namaskāra' accompanied with Oṁ at the beginning) and is embellished with word 'Namaḥ' at the end (that is the Mantra : Oṁ namo Nārāyaṇāya namaḥ) is regarded as the name (or illuminator) of all principles.

52b-53. In the same order of procedure, he should offer scents and fragrant flowers unto each in the manner prescribed. He shall show the eight mystic Mudrās (gestures) as indicated in the order mentioned above.

54. He should perform Japa by means of the Mūla Mantra eight, twentyeight or hundred and eight times. The knower of reality shall do thus.

55a. In those rites with specific desires in view, the devotee should do everything as mentioned with concentration and in accordance with his capacity.

55b-56a. The following eight are glorified as the Mudrās (mystic gestures) viz. : Lotus, Conch, Śrīvatsa, Gadā, Garuḍa, Cakra (discus), Khaḍga (Sword), Śārṅga (bow).

56b-57a. (Bidding farewell). "O Eternal Ancient Supreme Being, go, go into the greatest abode, the greatest region which Brahmā and other Devas do not know. O auspicious lady, those who do not know the mode of worship as mentioned by means of the Mantras of Hari should worship Acyuta by means of the Mūla mantra.

CHAPTER FIFTYEIGHT

*The Creation of the Cosmic Egg**

Vasu said :—

1. After duly and devoutly worshipping Puruṣottama. the devotee should bow down his head and propitiate the ocean with the following Mantra.

2. "In the whole universe, O lord of rivers, you are the vital air (Prāṇa) of all living beings, O Tīrtharāja (King of holy centres), obeisance be to you. Save me, O favourite of Acyuta."

3-4. After duly taking the holy dip in the ocean, in that auspicious and excellent holy centre and after duly worshipping Nārāyaṇa devoid of ailments and blemishes on the shore (of ocean), and after bowing down to Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and Subhadrā, the devotee should worship the ocean. Thereby, the man attains the benefit of hundreds of horse-sacrifices.

5-6. He shall be absolved of all sins. He shall be freed from all miseries. Like Hari, he shall be glorious and surrounded by the Devas. He can justifiably feel proud of beauty and youth. In an aerial chariot having the lustre of the sun and with the harmonious divine music of the Gandharvas, he shall take twentyone generations of his family and go to the world of Viṣṇu.

7. After enjoying various excellent pleasures there and after playing with the Devas (he will exhaust his merit and) fall off from that world. After coming here, he becomes a Brāhmaṇa, the most excellent knower of the Brahman.

8. He shall then be famous, intelligent, glorious and truthful. He shall have mastery over the sense-organs. He shall become a Brāhmaṇa fully conversant with the meanings of the Vedic and scriptural texts. Then he shall be a devotee of Viṣṇu.

*vide the *Brahma P.* Ch. 62 for comparison. Most of the verses (Viz. 1-23) in these chapters of the *NP.* and *Brahma P.* are common. The NP. however tells a different episode about the transformation of the sea-water from sweetness to saltishness (from v. 23 onwards)

9a. After attaining the Yoga pertaining to Viṣṇu, he shall attain liberation.

9b-11. The men of good intellect should offer charitable gifts on the following occasions—during the eclipses, during the transit of the sun (from one house of Zodiac to another), and on both tropical and equinotical transits, on the inaugural days of the Manvantaras and Yugas, during Vyatīpātas, when the days dwindle in length, during the full-moon days in the months of Āṣāḍha, Kārttika and Māgha and other auspicious Tithis. They then attain thousand times the benefit (as compared with that) derived from other holy centres.[1]

12. If the devotees offer balls of rice to the Pitṛs there, in accordance with the injunctions, the Pitṛs derive everlasting satisfaction.

13-15. Thus, O gentle lady, the benefit of the holy bath in the ocean has been recounted by me. So also the benefit of the charitable gifts and the offerings of Piṇḍas has been mentioned.

14. It is the bestower of the benefit of virtue, wealth, and liberation. It grants longevity, fame and renown. It yields worldly pleasures and liberation (from Saṁsāra) for men. It is conducive to wealth. It dispels the effects of evil dreams. It is meritorious. It annihilates all sins and bestows all desired benefits. It (this knowledge) should not be imparted to an atheist, to a knave or to a miser.

16. As long as the greatness of the Tīrtharāja[2] is not described by the Brāhmaṇas, other holy centres roar with their own respective greatness separately.

17. Puṣkara and other Tīrthas grant only their own respective benefits. But the Tīrtharāja, the ocean is the bestower of the benefit of all the Tīrthas.

18. Whichever Tīrthas, holy rivers and the lakes exist on the surface of the earth, they enter the ocean. Hence it has verily attained the excellence.

1. Compare the list of auspicious occasions for *Dāna* (religious gift) in *Mbh. Vana* 200. 125, *Laghu Śātātapa* 145, 150 *Vyatīpāta* is already explained.

2. *Tīrtharāja* 'The King of all Tīrthas' is the ocean (Bay of Bengal in this case). This title is explained in vv. 18-21.

19. The ocean, the lord of the rivers, is the king of all Tīrthas. Hence, it is superior to all other Tīrthas. It is the bestower of all desires.

20a.* When the sun rises up, the darkness perishes,* (so also the sin perishes in a place).

20b. On the ocean there are ninety-nine crores of Tīrthas. Hence whatever is performed there (on the sea-shore) such as ablution, charitable gift, Homa, Japa and worship of the Devas, is declared to be everlasting in the Śāstras.

Mohinī enquired :

21-22. Among all the oceans, how did this lord of rivers become briny ? O Preceptor, tell me, since O Brāhmaṇa, you are omniscient.[1]

Vasu narrated :

23. O lady of good fortune, listen. I shall explain the saltish state of this ocean and how this had been cursed by his mother who was the mother of the worlds.

24. O Mohinī, formerly in the process of creation there had been born seven oceans, born of the womb of Rādhā. They had divine physical bodies of various kinds.

25. Once, the lord of Rādhā, the lord of cowherds, cowherd-lasses and cows was indulging in sexual intercourse with his lady love in the Vṛndāvana forest.

26. In the middle of the group of Rāsa dances, in the brilliant-jewelled Maṇḍapa, he was in passionate union with his affectionate lady love.

27-28. Those seven children, the oceans, could not see their mother, the mother of the universe, when the time for

*A ref. to the *Brahma P.* shows that 20a and 20b in the NP. form parts of totally different verses. 20a in the NP becomes complete by the line "Similarly all the sins become totally annihilated by a bath in the *Tīrtha-rāja* (ocean)" 20a in B. M. P. Ch. 62.

1. The story about the saltish taste of the sea due to the curse of Rādhā as given here in vv. 23-38 has no basis in the Bh. P. or the Viṣṇu P. This story is not at all complimentary to Rādhā.

their breast-feeding had arrived. Weeping on being over-whelmed with hunger, they reached the jewelled Maṇḍapa. They went near it, eager to have their breast-feed.

29-30a. All of them were stopped by the groups of cowherdesses stationed at the entrance. The angry children impatient to have their usual breastfeed forced their entry into the Maṇḍapa. Thinking that they were only babies in the lap of their mother, the children were let in by the cowherdesses.

30b-32a. Then they went into the jewelled Maṇḍapa crying bitterly, "O mother, where are you ?". O queen, when the mother did not respond to the call of those children seeking breast-milk, the youngest of them all entered the actual spot of the mother's sexual dalliance.

32b-34a. On seeing her deluded sons unwittingly causing a break in her sexual dalliance, the agitated mother, O gentle lady, cursed them—"All of you go ere long to the world of earth since you had attempted to cause break in my sexual dalliance. After going to the earth, your sons will be staying there separately alone."

34b-35. O daughter of Brahmā, on hearing the worlds of their mother, the mother of the universe, all those children cried aloud (as they were) extremely frightened of the impending separation. Thereafter, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the destroyer of the anguish of those who bow down, became pleased with them.

36-37. "O sons, do not be afraid. I shall stand near you. All of you shall be in the liquid state always with separate forms and movements. This youngest son who came well within the place shall become briny." After saying this, the lord of the universe dismissed his sons.

38. In order to console them, he always stood by them. He who entered the room of sexual dalliance became the briny sea. The others remained separately as the milk ocean etc. assuming liquid form.

Mohini queried :

39. O Preceptor, who is this Rādhā mentioned by you as the chaste lady and the mother of the worlds. Explain to me

the reality about her. I am eager to listen to it.

40. The description of Rādhā and Mādhava is a mysterious secret in the Purāṇas. Since you factually know everything, O sage of holy rites, narrate it to me.

Vasiṣṭha said :

41. O King Māndhātā, on hearing the words of Mohinī, the magnanimous Vasu, the great devotee of Govinda, was visibly moved.

42. (Being extremely delighted) the hair all over his body stood on their ends. His heart was overwhelmed with joy. He as it were lost his consciousness with ecstasy. The excellent Brāhmaṇa spoke to Mohinī.

Vasu said :[1]

43. O gentle lady, listen, I shall tell you the secret of secrets. The story of Kṛṣṇa is to be guarded well. It brings about one's union with the Brahman.

44. I bow down to the lord who controls both—the Prakṛti and Puruṣa, who is the creator of the creators, who is the annihilator of the annihilators.

45. O gentle lady, all the incarnations are those of the Brahman in the form of Kṛṣṇa. The incarnator is Kṛṣṇa himself. He is both with and without attributes.

46. He alone is Rāma and Kṛṣṇa factually, but he is separate due to the variety of attributes. The other worlds are the creations of Prakṛti. But the Goloka (i.e. Kṛṣṇa's world) itself is devoid of attributes.

47. O gentle lady, the term, Gāvaḥ are the rays of brilliance, as observed (after ascertainment) by those who know the Vedas. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and others are manifestations of Prakṛti evolved out of its Guṇas.

48. O gentle lady, his refulgence is always without attributes but considered to be the cause of Guṇas. The Guṇas are

1. VV. 43-67 present a synthesis of Sāṅkhya and the Purāṇic concept of evolution of universe. It is obviously the theistic Sāṅkhya with Kṛṣṇa as the God.

18. By resorting to Matsya-Mādhava, a man will be invincible. He will be a liberal donor, enjoyer of pleasures, a warrior, a devotee of Viṣṇu and true to his word.

19-20a. Afterwards, by being enlightened in the Yoga leading to Hari, he shall attain liberation. The greatness of Matsyamādhava has been recounted by me to you. On seeing him, O daughter of Brahmā, the devotee shall attain all desires.

20b-22. I shall now describe the rite of Mārjana in the sacred and auspicious pool of water called Mārkaṇḍeyahrada. The ablution in the Mārkaṇḍeyahrada at all times is praised. It is an ancient rite to plunge into it with a singleminded devotion. Particularly on the Caturdaśī day, the ablution is destructive of all sins. Similarly, the ablution in the ocean at all times is praised.

23-24a. Particularly, on the full moon day, (the ablution in the ocean) makes one attain the benefit of a horse-sacrifice. On the full Moon day in the month of Jyeṣṭha, when the constellation is also Jyeṣṭhā, the devotee shall particulary visit that king of holy centres which is exceedingly splendid.

24b-25. He should have pure and holy Sāttvaic feelings physically, verbally and mentally, and his mind should not be directed towards anything else. He should be liberated from all mutually clashing opposites. He should be devoid of passions and malicious rivalry. He should circumambulate the beautiful Kalpa-tree, the banyan tree, where Janārdana himself abides.

26-27a. With great concentration, he should circumambulate it three times. On seeing it, the sin originating from seven births perishes. O Mohinī, he attains an extensive merit and his desired goal.

27b-28. I shall mention to you its names in the different Yugas. The names of the banyan tree in the Kṛta and other Yugas have been glorified as follows: (They know them as) Vaṭa, Vaṭeśvara, Śānta and Purāṇa Puruṣa.

29. In the Kṛta and other Yugas, the girth of the banyan tree has been respectively one Yojana, three-fourths of a Yojana, half a Yojana and one-fourth of a Yojana.

30. After bowing down to the banyan tree, repeating the Mantra mentioned above, the devotee should go to the south at

a distance of three hundred Dhanus (bows or twelve hundred hastas or cubits).

31. It is the place where the sign, the beautiful portals of heaven, become visible within the ocean, a log of wood equipped with all auspicious attributes has been drawn.

32. He should bow down to it, worship it and then stand by. He shall then be liberated from all the mulitudes of sins, effects of evil planets and other inauspicious things.

33. Formerly, Ugrasena looked at the ocean through heavenly portals. He went there. With purity of word, mind and deed, he meditated on the supreme Nārāyaṇa and performed the Ācamana rite.

34. Thereafter, the devotee should fix the eight-syllabled Mantra on the hand as well as on the body.[1] The Mantra is what learned men utter viz. 'Om namo Nārāyaṇāya'.

35. What purpose is served by many Mantras causing the richness of the mind ? The Mantra "Namo Narāyaṇāya" is that which achieves all objects.

36. Āpaḥ (waters) are glorified as Nārā since they are the offsprings of Nara (Man). They were the former abode of Viṣṇu. Hence Viṣṇu is remembered as Nārāyaṇa.

37. The Vedas are devoted to Nārāyaṇa. The Brāhmaṇas are devoted to Nārāyaṇa. Perfect knowledge is concerned with Nārāyaṇa. Holy rites are related to Nārāyaṇa.

38. Dharma (virtue) is concerned with Nārāyaṇa. The penance is connected with Nārāyaṇa, charitable gift is concerned with Nārāyaṇa; holy rites are related to Nārāyaṇa.

39. The worlds are concerned with Nārāyaṇa, the Devas are devoted to Nārāyaṇa; the Nitya rites (routine holy rites) are related to Nārāyaṇa. The region (to be reached) is concerned with Nārāyaṇa.

40. (All the elements are concerned with Nārāyaṇa, such as the earth is devoted to Nārāyaṇa; the water is related to Nārāyaṇa; the fire element is concerned with Nārāyaṇa; the firmament is devoted to Nārāyaṇa.

1. VV. 34-54 disclose the powerful influence of the Pañcarātra system on the NP.

41. The Vāyu (wind god) is devoted to Nārāyaṇa; the mind is concerned with Nārāyaṇa: the Ahaṁkāra (Ego) and the Buddhi (Intellect) both of these are of the nature of Nārāyaṇa.

42. The things of the past, present and future, whatever is termed as Jīva (living individual), the gross, the subtle and the huge, everything is of the nature of Nārāyaṇa.

43. O Mohinī, I do not see anything here different than Nārāyaṇa; this world consisting of the visible and the invisible, the mobile, and immobile beings is pervaded by him.

44-45. Waters constitute the abode of Viṣṇu, the ocean is the lord of waters. Hence, he is in the waters. Particularly, at the time of ablution, the devotee should worship Nārāyaṇa the dispeller of sins. He should remember Nārāyaṇa and meditate on him. He should then perform the Nyāsa rite on the hand and on the body.

46-47. He should fix the syllable Oṁ on the left hip, the syllable 'Nā' on the right hip, the syllable 'Rā' in the umbilical region, the syllable 'Ya' in the left arm and the syllable 'Ṇā' in the right arm. He should fix the syllable 'Ya' on the head and then fix beneath, above, sideways, in the heart behind and in front.

48-50. The learned devotee should meditate on Nārāyaṇa and thereafter begin the Kavaca (protective Mantras of mystic syllables) : In the east of me may Govinda protect; may Madhusūdana protect me in my south; may lord Śrīdhara protect me in my west; may Keśava protect me in the north; may Viṣṇu protect me in the south-east; may the unchanging Mādhava protect me in the southwest; may Hṛṣīkeśa protect me in the north-west; may Vāmana protect me in the north-east; may the Boar protect me in the earth and may Trivikrama protect me in the upward direction.

51. After assigning the Kavaca to various parts thus, the devotee should contemplate about himself. thus—"I am lord Nārāyaṇa. the wielder of the conch, discus and iron club."

52-54. After meditating on the Ātman thus, the devotee should repeat this Mantra : "You are the fire-god, O lord of bipeds; you are the discharger of the semen ; you are the

igniter of love's fire. You are the chief of all living beings and individual souls; you are the unchanging lord; you are the Araṇi of the nectar; O lord of waters, you are the source of origin of the Devas; dispel my sins, O king of Tīrthas obeisance be to you".

After uttering thus duly, he should perform the rite of ablution according to injunctions.

55. Otherwise, O daughter of Brahmā, the bath there is not commended. The devotee should perform the rite of ablution and Mārjana (sprinkling) within water with those Mantras the deities of which are the waters.

56-57a. Then he should repeat the Mantra of Aghamarṣaṇa. O gentle lady, just as the horse-sacrifice is a Yajña that dispels sins, so also the hymn of Aghamarṣaṇa[1] dispels all sins.

57b-58. He should then come out of water and wear clean washed clothes. He should then restrain his breath, perform Ācamana rite and worship the sun by way of Sandhyā. He should then offer in the upward direction a handful of water and flowers.

59. With the arms raised up, he should worship the sun by means of the Mantras his symbols. Thereafter, he should repeat the holy and divine Gâyatrī Mantra hundred and eight times.

60. Standing there with concentration, he should repeat other Mantras also pertaining to the sun. He should then circumambulate and bow to the sun and be seated.

61-62a. He should then face the east and recite Veda-Mantras as Svādhyāya. Then the Tarpaṇa rite of the Devas, human beings, sages and the Pitṛs of his own family should be duly performed by the devotee who is the knower of names and Gotra. He should perform the Tarpaṇa rite with water mixed with sesame seeds, according to prescribed injunction and with concentration of mind.

62b-64a. During Śrāddha and the Havana (oblations to fire) rites the devotee should perform the same with a single

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1. *Aghamarṣaṇa* hymns (RV. X. 190. 1-3) are supposed to wash off sins of men.

hand. The rite of Tarpaṇa shall be performed with both the hands. This is the standing injunction. He should perform the rite with the right hand supported by the left (?) "May they be satiated". He shall utter these words clearly uttering the name and the Gotra but silently otherwise.

64b-65a. If anyone out of delusion performs the Tarpaṇa rite for the Pitṛs, by means of gingelly seeds clinging to the body, it is as though the Tarpaṇa rite has been performed by means of skin, flesh, blood and bones.

65b-67a. The water libation will not reach the Pitṛs, if the devotee stands in water and offers on to the ground or if he stands on the ground and offers it into the water. The water should be offered standing on the ground and on to the ground. What is not offered on the ground does not reach (the Pitṛs). The earth has been given by Brahmā as the imperishable (eternal) place of the Pitṛs. Hence (the libation) should be given only there, by the person who wishes for the pleasure of the Pitṛs.

67b-68a. The earth is born out of water; the water is present therein and gets dissolved in the earth. Hence, one should offer water on the ground.

68b,c. He should spread the Kuśa grass on the ground and invoke the Pitṛs or the Devas by their respective Mantras. In respect of the Devas, the tips of the Kuśa grass shall be towards the east, and in the case of the Pitṛs (manes) they shall be towards the south.

CHAPTER FIFTYSEVEN

The Glory of Puruṣottama : The Procedure of Worship[1]

Vasu said :

1-3. After performing the rite of Tarpaṇa to gods, sages, Pitṛs and others, the pilgrim should silently perform Ācamana (religious sipping of water). O daughter of Brahmā, he should draw a square of the side of a Hasta (a cubit of about eighteen inches). Is should be beautiful and should have four entrances. It represents the city of Puruṣottama on the shore of the great ocean. In its middle, he should draw the mystic diagram of a lotus with eight petals and the pericarp. O Mohinī, he should draw the mystic diagram and worship in it, Lord Nārāyaṇa, the unborn eternal deity, in accordance with the same injunctions as in the case of eight-syllabled Mantra.

4. Henceforth, I shall explain fully to you the excellent mode of purification of the physical body. The* syllable Kṣa in the company of the syllable Ra is red and should be thought of in the heart.

5. On his head, he should think of the syllable 'E' as stationed in the middle of the dice of the moon and having three blazing 'Śikhās' burning down the heaps of the sins of the world.

6. It is white in colour and it showers nectar flooding the earth**. The devotee who has shaken off sins, thus shall thereafter become one with a divine body.

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1. This chapter gives the application of Pañca-rātra Āgama to the worship of Puruṣottama. The esoteric application of the mantra *Oṁ namo Nārāyaṇāya* and *Viṣṇave namaḥ* to the various parts of one's person (technically known as *Nyāsa*) is an essential part of Tantrism.

This chapter is practically the same as the *Brahma P.* Ch. 61. Thus the *Brahma purāṇa* 61.1-12 are the same as the NP 57.1-12; so also *Brahma P.* 61.23-58 and the NP. 57.23-58 are identical but with the difference of few readings here and there.

*Here *Brahma P.* V. 46 reads :

akāraṁ hṛdaye dhyātvā cakra-rekhā-samanvitam |

The *Anāhata Cakra* is presumed to be at the heart. But neither *Kṣa* nor *Ra* or *A* form the *bījas* and the 'Petals' of that *Cakra.*

**The qualities of blazing and burning sins may be those of the syllable *Kṣa*, in case the first half of verse 6 is taken along with the 5th verse).

7. The learned devotee, should then fix the eight syllabled Mantra in the body as well as in the Ātman. He should fix it beginning with the left foot and proceed gradually.

8. With the Mūla mantra, the aspirant should perform the rite of purification of the hand. The Nyāsa rite shall have five subsidiary limbs and four manifestations of Viṣṇu.

9. He should fix each of the syllables separately on the fingers. The syllable OM is the earth. He should fix it on the left foot. It is white in colour.

10. The syllable *na* is dark-coloured. It is the Bhuvaḥ (the world). It is fixed on the right foot. They call the syllable *mo* as Kāla (Time) alone. It must be fixed in the left hip.

11. The syllable *nā* (which is the previous seed*) is established in the southern right side. They call *rā* the refulgence (the Fire element) and it is stabilised in the umbilical region.

12. The syllable *ya* is of gaseous nature and it has resorted to the left shoulder. The syllable *ṇā* shall always be known to have been stablished in the right shoulder.

13-14. The syllable *ya* is stationed on the head, where the worlds are also stabilised. After fixing Oṁkāra in the heart, the syllable 'vi' on the head, the syllable 'ṣṇa' on the tuft and the syllable 'vc' in the Kavaca (coat of mail). He shall fix *na* in the eyes. The syllable *maḥ* is said to be the 'Astra' 'miraculous weapon'.

15. The (deity) Vāsudeva is of white colour. It is fixed in the forehead. (He is stationed on the forehead) The deity Saṁkarṣaṇa is red. He is fixed in the mouth. He resembles the fire and the sun.

16. (The manifestation called 'Pradyumna' is yellow in colour and is assigned in the heart and the Vyūha (manifestation) known as Aniruddha is stationed at the sex-organ. Hari thus pervades all limbs. The Almighty one is worshipped thus in his four-fold manifestations (Vyūhas)

***Br. P. 57.11a reads: *Sarva-bīja.*

17. Viṣṇu is present in front of me; Keśava abides behind me; Govinda is present on the right side; Madhusūdana is present on the left side.

18. Vaikuṇṭha is present above, and Varāha (the Divine Boar) on the ground. Mādhava is present in all those intermediate quarters between the main directions.

19. My protection is effected by Narasiṁha whether I go or stay, whether I keep awake or am asleep. I am identical with Vāsudeva.

20. After becoming identical with Viṣṇu thus, the devotee should begin the rite. He should combine all the principles with the Deva, just as is done in the case of the physical body.

21. That which ends with the syllable 'pha' is cited to be auspicious and destructive of all obstacles. He shall think of the spheres of the sun, moon and fire.

22-23. In the middle of the lotus of the internal side of the cosmos, the devotee shall fix Viṣṇu. Thereafter, he should mentally think of the excellent lustre, Praṇava (om) seated in the pericarp, the eternal being of the form of brilliance. Thereafter, he should perform the Nyāsa* rite of the eight-syllabled Mantra in due order.

24. The worship by means of that Mantra in the state of analysis and synthesis (Vyasta-Samasta) ** is remembered to be great : He should then worship the eternal lord by means of the twelve-syllabled Mantra.

25. He should then retain in the heart the immense being with four arms and lustre equal to that of crores of suns.

26-29. After thinking about the great Yoga, he should invoke the following deities in due order :

(The Mantra for invocation) : "O Nārāyaṇa, may these Devas, the bestowers of boons come in front of me viz. he who has assumed the form of the Fish, Narasiṁha and Vāmana."

*_Nyāsa_ is the assignment of the various parts of the body to different deities (or syllables of Mantras). It is accompanied with particular Mantra, syllable or prayer to corresponding gesticulations.

**Literally : _Vyasta_='inherent in or pervading _all the several parts_ of anything,' while _Samasta_='inherent in or pervading _the whole of_ anything.

(The Mantra for offering a seat.) "Sumeru is the pedestal for your feet. The seat has been made in the form of the lotus. O Madhusūdana, stay behind for the benefit of all living beings". (The Mantra for Pādya) "O eternal lord Padmanābha, the Pādya (water for washing feet) is offered at your feet. O Viṣṇu, O deity with the eyes like the petals of the lotus, O Madhusūdana, accept it.

(The Mantra for Madhuparka and Arghya) 'O great lord, accept Madhuparka prepared by me. Accept it in the company of Brahmā and others. O Puruṣottama, accept the Arghya devoutly offered by me.

30-33. (The Mantra for Ācamanīya) : "The water of the Mandākinī (the Gaṅgā) is auspicious. It dispels all sins. Accept that as the water for the rite of Ācamana. It has been offered by me with great devotion."

(The Mantra for bath) : "You are the water, the earth, the fiery (element) and the wind (element). I am bathing you with the water that alone supports the worlds."

(The Mantra for offering clothes) : "May these two clothes be accepted; they are woven with the divine yarn; they have the colour of the Yajña and they have the lustre and the glitter of gold."

(The Mantra for smearing the Lord with unguents) : "O Keśava, neither your body nor your activities do I know perfectly.

34-36. May the unguent offered by me be accepted and smeared." (The Mantra for offering a sacred thread) : "The sacred thread which has been made of three turns by the Lotus-born god with Mantras of Ṛk, Yajus and Sāman and is equipped with the knot called Sāvitrī, has been dedicated to you."

(The Mantra for decorating with ornaments) : "O Mādhava, the ornaments consisting of divine jewels and having the lustre of the fire and the sun will make your limbs splendid-looking".

The Mantra for waving lights) : "O lord of the luminaries, you alone are the fiery refulgence of the sun and the moon of the lightning and the fire. May this light be accepted."

37. (The Mantra for offering incense) : "This fragrant vegetable juice divine and presented along with sweat scents is for you. May this incense offered to you devoutly by me be accepted."

38. (The Mantra for offering food as Naivedya) : "Tasty cooked food of four kinds has been offered to you with devotion. It has six tastes in the varieties of dishes. O Keśava, this is the Naivedya unto you."

39-41. The devotee should perform the Nyāsa in the petal in the east; that of Saṁkarṣaṇa in the petal in the south; that of Pradyumna in the petal in the west, and that of Anuruddha in the petal in the north. He should perform the Nyāsa of the Varāha incarnation in the south-east; that of Narasiṁha in the south-west; that of Mādhava in the north-west, that of Trivikrama in the north-east. He shall perform the Nyāsa of Garuḍa, in front of the lord of the eight-syllabled Mantra.

42-43. He should fix the discus on the left side and the conch on the right side. The great iron club also should be fixed on the right hand side of the lord. Then the scholarly devotee should fix the bow to the left of the lord. The divine quiver shall be fixed on the right hand side and the sword on the left.

44-45. After fixing Śrī to the south side, the devotee should fix Puṣṭi to the north side and the Vana-mālā (the garland of sylvan flowers) as well as the Śrīvatsa mark and Kaustubha gem in front of the Lord. He should fix the heart etc. in the four quarters beginning with the east. Thereafter, he shall fix the weapou of the lord of the Devas in the corner.

46-48a. He should worship the following deities (the guardians of the quarters) : Viz. Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirṛti, Varuṇa, Vāyu, Dhanada (Kubera), Īśāna, Ananta and Brahmā. He should worship them with their respective Mantras (in the respective quarters) and below as well as above. By worshipping thus the lord of the Devas, Janārdana, stationed in the Mystic diagram, the man shall attain cherished desires.

48b-50a. He who sees this Janārdana stationed in the mystic diagram worshipped in accordance with this injunction, shall enter the unchanging Viṣṇu. He, by whom Keśava is worshipped at least once in this manner shall surmount (the difficulties of bath, old age and death and attain the region of Viṣṇu.

50b-51a. Śvetadvīpa is glorified for the daily residence of that person who devoutly remembers Nārāyaṇa continuously and diligently.

51b-52a. That Mantra which begins with 'Oṁ Namaḥ' (Lit : that which contains 'Namaskāra' accompanied with Oṁ at the beginning) and is embellished with word 'Namaḥ' at the end (that is the Mantra : Oṁ namo Nārāyaṇāya namaḥ) is regarded as the name (or illuminator) of all principles.

52b-53. In the same order of procedure, he should offer scents and fragrant flowers unto each in the manner prescribed. He shall show the eight mystic Mudrās (gestures) as indicated in the order mentioned above.

54. He should perform Japa by means of the Mūla Mantra eight, twentyeight or hundred and eight times. The knower of reality shall do thus.

55a. In those rites with specific desires in view, the devotee should do everything as mentioned with concentration and in accordance with his capacity.

55b-56a. The following eight are glorified as the Mudrās (mystic gestures) viz. : Lotus, Conch, Śrīvatsa, Gadā, Garuḍa, Cakra (discus), Khaḍga (Sword), Śārṅga (bow).

56b-57a. (Bidding farewell). "O Eternal Ancient Supreme Being, go, go into the greatest abode, the greatest region which Brahmā and other Devas do not know. O auspicious lady, those who do not know the mode of worship as mentioned by means of the Mantras of Hari should worship Acyuta by means of the Mūla mantra.

CHAPTER FIFTYEIGHT

*The Creation of the Cosmic Egg**

Vasu said :—

1. After duly and devoutly worshipping Puruṣottama. the devotee should bow down his head and propitiate the ocean with the following Mantra.

2. "In the whole universe, O lord of rivers, you are the vital air (Prāṇa) of all living beings, O Tīrtharāja (King of holy centres), obeisance be to you. Save me, O favourite of Acyuta."

3-4. After duly taking the holy dip in the ocean, in that auspicious and excellent holy centre and after duly worshipping Nārāyaṇa devoid of ailments and blemishes on the shore (of ocean), and after bowing down to Rāma, Kṛṣṇa and Subhadrā, the devotee should worship the ocean. Thereby, the man attains the benefit of hundreds of horse-sacrifices.

5-6. He shall be absolved of all sins. He shall be freed from all miseries. Like Hari, he shall be glorious and surrounded by the Devas. He can justifiably feel proud of beauty and youth. In an aerial chariot having the lustre of the sun and with the harmonious divine music of the Gandharvas, he shall take twentyone generations of his family and go to the world of Viṣṇu.

7. After enjoying various excellent pleasures there and after playing with the Devas (he will exhaust his merit and) fall off from that world. After coming here, he becomes a Brāhmaṇa, the most excellent knower of the Brahman.

8. He shall then be famous, intelligent, glorious and truthful. He shall have mastery over the sense-organs. He shall become a Brāhmaṇa fully conversant with the meanings of the Vedic and scriptural texts. Then he shall be a devotee of Viṣṇu.

*vide the *Brahma P.* Ch. 62 for comparison. Most of the verses (Viz. 1-23) in these chapters of the *NP.* and *Brahma P.* are common. The NP. however tells a different episode about the transformation of the sea-water from sweetness to saltishness (from v. 23 onwards)

9a. After attaining the Yoga pertaining to Viṣṇu, he shall attain liberation.

9b-11. The men of good intellect should offer charitable gifts on the following occasions—during the eclipses, during the transit of the sun (from one house of Zodiac to another), and on both tropical and equinotical transits, on the inaugural days of the Manvantaras and Yugas, during Vyatīpātas, when the days dwindle in length, during the full-moon days in the months of Āṣāḍha, Kārttika and Māgha and other auspicious Tithis. They then attain thousand times the benefit (as compared with that) derived from other holy centres.[1]

12. If the devotees offer balls of rice to the Pitṛs there, in accordance with the injunctions, the Pitṛs derive everlasting satisfaction.

13-15. Thus, O gentle lady, the benefit of the holy bath in the ocean has been recounted by me. So also the benefit of the charitable gifts and the offerings of Piṇḍas has been mentioned.

14. It is the bestower of the benefit of virtue, wealth, and liberation. It grants longevity, fame and renown. It yields worldly pleasures and liberation (from Saṁsāra) for men. It is conducive to wealth. It dispels the effects of evil dreams. It is meritorious. It annihilates all sins and bestows all desired benefits. It (this knowledge) should not be imparted to an atheist, to a knave or to a miser.

16. As long as the greatness of the Tīrtharāja[2] is not described by the Brāhmaṇas, other holy centres roar with their own respective greatness separately.

17. Puṣkara and other Tīrthas grant only their own respective benefits. But the Tīrtharāja, the ocean is the bestower of the benefit of all the Tīrthas.

18. Whichever Tīrthas, holy rivers and the lakes exist on the surface of the earth, they enter the ocean. Hence it has verily attained the excellence.

1. Compare the list of auspicious occasions for *Dāna* (religious gift) in *Mbh. Vana* 200. 125, *Laghu Śātātapa* 145, 150 *Vyatīpāta* is already explained.

2. *Tīrtharāja* 'The King of all Tirthas' is the ocean (Bay of Bengal in this case). This title is explained in vv. 18-21.

19. The ocean, the lord of the rivers, is the king of all Tīrthas. Hence, it is superior to all other Tīrthas. It is the bestower of all desires.

20a.* When the sun rises up, the darkness perishes, (so also the sin perishes in a place).

20b. On the ocean there are ninety-nine crores of Tīrthas. Hence whatever is performed there (on the sea-shore) such as ablution, charitable gift, Homa, Japa and worship of the Devas, is declared to be everlasting in the Śāstras.

Mohini enquired :

21-22. Among all the oceans, how did this lord of rivers become briny ? O Preceptor, tell me, since O Brāhmaṇa, you are omniscient.[1]

Vasu narrated :

23. O lady of good fortune, listen. I shall explain the saltish state of this ocean and how this had been cursed by his mother who was the mother of the worlds.

24. O Mohinī, formerly in the process of creation there had been born seven oceans, born of the womb of Rādhā. They had divine physical bodies of various kinds.

25. Once, the lord of Rādhā, the lord of cowherds, cowherd-lasses and cows was indulging in sexual intercourse with his lady love in the Vṛndāvana forest.

26. In the middle of the group of Rāsa dances, in the brilliant-jewelled Maṇḍapa, he was in passionate union with his affectionate lady love.

27-28. Those seven children, the oceans, could not see their mother, the mother of the universe, when the time for

*A ref. to the *Brahma P.* shows that 20a and 20b in the NP. form parts of totally different verses. 20a in the NP becomes complete by the line "Similarly all the sins become totally annihilated by a bath in the *Tīrtha-rāja* (ocean)" 20a in B. M. P. Ch. 62.

1. The story about the saltish taste of the sea due to the curse of Rādhā as given here in vv. 23-38 has no basis in the Bh. P. or the Viṣṇu P. This story is not at all complimentary to Rādhā.

their breast-feeding had arrived. Weeping on being over-whelmed with hunger, they reached the jewelled Maṇḍapa. They went near it, eager to have their breast-feed.

29-30a. All of them were stopped by the groups of cowherdesses stationed at the entrance. The angry children impatient to have their usual breastfeed forced their entry into the Maṇḍapa. Thinking that they were only babies in the lap of their mother, the children were let in by the cowherdesses.

30b-32a. Then they went into the jewelled Maṇḍapa crying bitterly, "O mother, where are you ?". O queen, when the mother did not respond to the call of those children seeking breast-milk, the youngest of them all entered the actual spot of the mother's sexual dalliance.

32b-34a. On seeing her deluded sons unwittingly causing a break in her sexual dalliance, the agitated mother, O gentle lady, cursed them—"All of you go ere long to the world of earth since you had attempted to cause break in my sexual dalliance. After going to the earth, your sons will be staying there separately alone."

34b-35. O daughter of Brahmā, on hearing the worlds of their mother, the mother of the universe, all those children cried aloud (as they were) extremely frightened of the impending separation. Thereafter, Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the destroyer of the anguish of those who bow down, became pleased with them.

36-37. "O sons, do not be afraid. I shall stand near you. All of you shall be in the liquid state always with separate forms and movements. This youngest son who came well within the place shall become briny." After saying this, the lord of the universe dismissed his sons.

38. In order to console them, he always stood by them. He who entered the room of sexual dalliance became the briny sea. The others remained separately as the milk ocean etc. assuming liquid form.

Mohinī queried :

39. O Preceptor, who is this Rādhā mentioned by you as the chaste lady and the mother of the worlds. Explain to me

the reality about her. I am eager to listen to it.

40. The description of Rādhā and Mādhava is a mysterious secret in the Purāṇas. Since you factually know everything, O sage of holy rites, narrate it to me.

Vasiṣṭha said :

41. O King Māndhātā, on hearing the words of Mohinī, the magnanimous Vasu, the great devotee of Govinda, was visibly moved.

42. (Being extremely delighted) the hair all over his body stood on their ends. His heart was overwhelmed with joy. He as it were lost his consciousness with ecstasy. The excellent Brāhmaṇa spoke to Mohinī.

Vasu said :[1]

43. O gentle lady, listen, I shall tell you the secret of secrets. The story of Kṛṣṇa is to be guarded well. It brings about one's union with the Brahman.

44. I bow down to the lord who controls both—the Prakṛti and Puruṣa, who is the creator of the creators, who is the annihilator of the annihilators.

45. O gentle lady, all the incarnations are those of the Brahman in the form of Kṛṣṇa. The incarnator is Kṛṣṇa himself. He is both with and without attributes.

46. He alone is Rāma and Kṛṣṇa factually, but he is separate due to the variety of attributes. The other worlds are the creations of Prakṛti. But the Goloka (i.e. Kṛṣṇa's world) itself is devoid of attributes.

47. O gentle lady, the term, Gāvaḥ are the rays of brilliance, as observed (after ascertainment) by those who know the Vedas. Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Śiva and others are manifestations of Prakṛti evolved out of its Guṇas.

48. O gentle lady, his refulgence is always without attributes but considered to be the cause of Guṇas. The Guṇas are

1. VV. 43-67 present a synthesis of Sāṅkhya and the Purāṇic concept of evolution of universe. It is obviously the theistic Sāṅkhya with Kṛṣṇa as the God.

26b-27a. By visiting Kṛṣṇa seated on the cushioned couch a man obtains that benefit which is cited to result from the gift of a hundred virgins.

27b-31. By visiting Rāma and Kṛṣṇa along with Subhadrā seated in the cushioned sofa, one obtains the following benefits viz. the gift of a hundred gold coins; the gift of lands; the gift of cooked rice; hospitability extended to every one; the rite of duly discharging the Vṛṣa (Bull); the gift of water during the summer; the gift of Tiladhenu (replica of cow in gingelly seeds); the gift of elephants, horses and chariots; the rite of Cāndrāyaṇa; observance of fast for a month; pilgrimage to all holy centres and holy rites and religious gifts. Hence a man or a woman must visit Puruṣottama. O Mohinī, when duly bathed with the water that remains after Kṛṣṇa has been duly bathed, the barren woman, the lady whose progeny is dead, unfortunate wretched persons, those who are affected by evil planets, those who are possessed by Rākṣasas and others and those who are affected by ailments attain purity immediately. They attain desired benefits. O lady of good lustre, they attain other things they desire, if they perform ablutions as per injunctions.

32. All other sacred waters on the earth do not deserve even the sixteenth part of the remainder of water after the ablution of Kṛṣṇa.

33. Hence the devotee should sprinkle limbs (of his body) with the sacred water that is left over after the ablution of the deity lying down in the waters. It is the sacred water that bestows all desired benefits.

34. There is no doubt about this that those who visit Kṛṣṇa who goes towards the south after ablution, are liberated from even the murder of a Brāhmaṇa and other sins.

35. By visiting Kṛṣṇa facing the south, a man obtains that benefit which is mentioned in the scriptures as the result of circumambulating the earth three times.

36. By visiting Kṛṣṇa proceeding to the south, one attains the benefit cited as the result of pilgrimages in the whole of the earth.

37-41. By visiting Kṛṣṇa proceeding to the south one attains that benefit which is derivable from the holy bath

at Gaṅgādvāra, Kubjāmra, Kurukṣetra during the solar eclipse, at Puṣkara and other sacred waters. Of what avail is much talk ? By visiting Subhadrā, Balarāma and Keśava facing the south, one attains the benefit mentioned in the Vedas, scriptures, Purāṇas, Mahābhārata, Saṁhitās and other works, as the fruits of meritorious rites.

42. Those who see Kṛṣṇa seated in the chariot along with Subhadrā and Balarāma and proceed to Guṇḍicā[1] Maṇḍapa go to the abode of Hari.

43. By undertaking pilgrimage even once, at the time of journey to Guṇḍicā, at the time of equinox in the month of Phālguna, a man goes to the world of Viṣṇu.

44. It is certain that a man will stay in the world of Viṣṇu for as many Kalpas as the number of pilgrimages he undertakes to Śrīpuruṣottama.

45. O daughter of Brahmā, when twelve pilgrimages are completed, the devotee shall perform the rite of installation in accordance with the injunctions. It will be destructive of sins.

46. On the eleventh day in the bright half of the month of Jyeṣṭha, the devotee should go to the sacred waters, pure in mind and body. He should perform the rite of Ācamana therein.

47. After invoking the holy Tīrthas and meditating on Nārāyaṇa, he should take holy bath in the manner indicated in the sacred precepts.

48. After the bath in a decent manner, the devotee should perform Tarpaṇa rite for the Devas, sages, and Pitṛs with the due utterance of their names and Gotras.

49-50. After coming out of the water he should wear two pure clothes and perform the Ācamana rite as well as the due worship of Bhāskara the sun. He should then repeat Gāyatrī, the holy Mantra, the mother of the Vedas, one hundred and eight times : and also other Mantras pertaining to the sun. He should circumambulate three times and then bow to the sun.

1. Guṇḍicā (Guṇḍivā in the BM. P.) is the summer 'palace' of Jagannātha (Puruṣottama). It is at a distance of about 1 mile from the Jagannātha temple at Puri.

51-53. The procedure for the holy dip and the repetition of Japas is, in regard to the three castes, the same as mentioned in the Vedas. O fair lady, in regard to the Śūdras and the women the repetition of the Vedic texts is to be avoided. Thereafter, he should, with devotion, go to Śrī Puruṣottama installed in the temple. According to the injunctions, he should wash his hands and feet and perform the Ācamana rite. He should bathe the lord with ghee and thereafter with milk.

54. He should then bathe deity with honey, fragrant water and the water from the Tīrtha mixed with the sandal paste. Thereafter, the devotee should clothe the deity with excellent pair of clothes.

55 He should smear deity with sandal paste, agallochum, camphor and saffron. He should worship Puruṣottama by means of lotuses, with great devotion.

56-57. After thus worshipping Hari, the lord of the universe the bestower of worldly pleasures and salvation, the devotee should burn incense mixed with agallochum. He should burn Guggula (aromatic resin) of the pure variety along with ghee. With devotion he should light the lamp with ghee in accordance with his capacity.

58. With great concentration, he should light twelve other lamps, O goddess, with cow's ghee or with gingelly oil.

59-60. The devotee then offers the following as Naivedyas viz ; milk-pudding, friend pie, coiled baked pie, circular fried coils, sweet meats, molasses and fruits. After completing the worship of Puruṣottama by means of the fivefold services, the devotee should perform hundred and eight times the Japa of the Mantra—"Om obeisance to Puruṣottama".

61. Thereafter, he should propitiate the lord by bowing down and prostrating before him like a staff. Thereafter, he should honour the preceptor with devotion, with flowers, garments and unguents.

62-63. O daughter of Brahmā, (the preceptor should be honoured) since there is no difference between these two (i.e. the preceptor and the lord).

With concentration and purity of mind, the devotee should erect the ceremonial hall (Maṇḍapa) over the lord. The zone

in front should be brilliant and variegated with flowers. After making an emphatic determination at the outset, the devotee should keep awake at night.

64. The learned devotee should cause the discourse on Vāsudeva conducted and songs sung about him. He should spend the night meditating, reading and eulogising the lord.

65-66a. Then, after the Dvādaśī has dawned splendidly, the devotee should invite twelve Brāhmaṇas who are life-long students of the Vedas, who have taken a holy bath after holy rites, are well conversant with the Itihāsa and the Purāṇas, have learned the Vedas and have restrained their sense-organs.

66b-68. After duly completing holy bath, the devotee should wear washed cloth and restrain and conquer the sense-organs. He should then bathe Puruṣottama who is stationed there, with devotion as before. He shall propitiate the lord of the universe with scents, fragrant flowers, presents, offerings of food, lamps, many kinds of reverential services, salutations, circum-ambulations, Japas, eulogies, prostrations, pleasant songs and instrumental music.

69-70a. Then he should honour the Brāhmaṇas, He should give them twelve cows, gold, an umbrella, a pair of sandals and bellmetal vessel with devotion.

70b-73. He should, thereafter, feed the Brāhmaṇas with milkpudding at the outset. Afterwards different edibles and foodstuffs, cooked rice with jaggery and sugarcandy shall be offered to them. When the Brāhmaṇas are satisfied after the meal and have had their rest mentally (and physically), he should offer them twelve water pots along with sweets. O daughter of Brahmā, he should give them monetary gifts too according to his capacity. The learned devotee should worship them on a par with Viṣṇu by means of gold, clothes, cows, food-grains, and other articles. After making obeisance to them, he should repeat this Mantra.

74. (Mantra) "May the omnipresent lord who is the master of the universe, who wields conch, discus and iron club, may Puruṣottama, the lord devoid of beginning and death, be pleased".

75. After uttering this and respectfully circumambulating

the Brāhmaṇas three times, the devotee should bow down his head and bid them farewell with the preceptor.

76-78. He should follow the Brāhmaṇas upto boundary line of his village with devotion. After following the Brāhmaṇas, he should bow to them once again and return. Having returned home, he should silently take food in the company of his kins and relatives. By doing thus, the man or the woman devotee shall derive the benefit of a thousand horse-sacrifices and a hundred Rājasūyas. The excellent man shall uplift a hundred previous ancestors.

79-82. O gentle lady, he will uplift a hundred successors as well. He will be assuming the divine unchanging form. He will be endowed with all auspicious characteristics. He will be bedecked in all ornaments. He will be flourishing with all desires in the mind realized. He will be blessed with good attributes, comeliness and youthful age (or longevity). He will be eulogised by Gandharvas and Apsaras all round. He will be going to the world of Viṣṇu by means of an aerial chariot that has the brilliance of the sun, which can go as he pleases, is steady, fitted with flags and banners and which has the lustre of a hundred suns. He will be brightening all the quarters thereby in the firmament. He will be devoid of exhaustion. He will become a youth of great strength and intelligence. Thus he will go to the world of Viṣṇu.

83. There he enjoys desired pleasures for the period of a hundred Kalpas. O gentle lady, he will stay there eulogised by excellent sages. He will be devoid of ailments.

84. O gentle lady, just as the lord of the universe, the wielder of the conch, discus and iron club rejoices after assuming the four-armed form, so this devotee will be rejoicing in that form.

85. O chaste lady, after enjoying excellent pleasures there and after sporting there for a long time, at the end thereof, he goes to the abode of Brahmā that yields all desires.

86. It is the abode that is rendered splendid by the Siddhas, Vidyādharas, Devas and Kinnaras.

87. After enjoying happiness there for the period of ninety Kalpas, the man goes to the world of Rudra that bestows happiness and that is resorted to by Devas, Siddhas,

Vidyādharas and Yakṣas. It is adorned by Daityas and Dānavas.

88. After enjoying happiness there for the period of eighty Kalpas, the man at the end of that period, goes to Goloka equipped with all means of pleasures.

89-91. It is a place rendered splendid by Devas, Siddhas and Apsaras. It is charming. He enjoys desired pleasures there for the period of seventy Kalpas. Thereafter, he goes to the excellent world of Prajāpati. Joyously he experiences different kinds of happiness there for the period of sixty kalpas. At the end of that period, he shall go to Śakra's abode containing different kinds of wonderful features. There the man enjoys happiness for the period of fifty Kalpas. He then goes to the abode of immortal ones, embellished with aerial chariots.

92-96. He enjoys rare pleasures there for the period of forty Kalpas. Then he goes to the stellar world equipped with different kinds of happiness and enjoys there excellent pleasures as desired, for the period of thirty Kalpas. O daughter of Brahmā, from there he goes to the lunar world where stays the moon adorned by the Devas. After enjoying rare pleasures for the period of twenty Kalpas, he goes over to the world of the sun god worshipped by Devas. After enjoying splendid pleasures there for the period of ten Kalpas, he becomes contented and delighted; thence he goes to the abode of Gandharvas that is very inaccessible.

97. There he enjoys all kinds of pleasures upto satiety for the period of a Kalpa. Then he comes over to the earth and is born as a righteous king.

98. He becomes an emperor of great prowess. He is bedecked in all attributes. He rules over the kingdom righteously and performs Yajñas with liberal monetary gifts.

99. At the end of that period, he goes to the world of yogin that is auspicious and that bestows salvation. As long as all living beings are not dissolved, he enjoys excellent pleasures there.

100-101. Coming therefrom he is born in the family of Yogins, in an excellent family of devotees of Viṣṇu, difficult of access and received with approbation by the good. O chaste

lady, he becomes an excellent Brāhmaṇa, a master of four Vedas, devoted to the performance of Brahmayajña.

102-103. By adopting Yoga pertaining to Viṣṇu, he shall attain liberation. Thus the benefit of the pilgrimage to Puruṣottama has been recounted to you. It yields both worldly pleasures and salvation unto men. What else do you wish to hear ?

CHAPTER SIXTYTWO

The greatness of the most Eminent Tirtha Prayāga
The Procedure of Pilgrimage

Vasiṣṭha Said :

1-3. O king Māndhātā, on hearing this greatness of Puruṣottama (kṣetra), that bestows worldly pleasures and salvation, Mohinī the daughter of Brahmā asked that Brāhmaṇa Vasu, her own family priest.

Mohini requested :

O Brāhmaṇa, the very wonderful glory of Puruṣottama kṣetra has been heard. Now tell me the greatness of Prayāga too, O Brāhmaṇa, observer of holy rites. O preceptor, That the Tīrtha Prayāga is the king of all Tīrthas, has been heard by me before.

4-5. Narrate to me its greatness along with the procedure of its pilgrimages. What specific formalities be observed by men devoted to virtuous rites in regard to special sacred places regarded as highly meritorious and respectable, Tīrthas in particular.

6. O king on hearing those words uttered by Mohinī, that Brāhmaṇa recounted to her the traditional account of Prayāga with the enunciation of the general rules of pilgrimage at the outset.

Vasu said :

7. Listen, O gentle lady, I shall recount the rules of procedure in undertaking pilgrimages. It is only by observing those rules that a man can attain the benefit as mentioned. Going to a pilgrimage is meritorious; It surpasses even Yajñas.

8. A man becomes indigent by not observing fast for three days, by not giving gold in gift and by not offering cows after visiting holy places.

9. Even by performing Agniṣṭoma and other Yajñas with magnificent monetary gifts, one does not attain that benefit which results from undertaking pilgrimages.

10. Even he who casually visits a holy centre unwittingly shall attain all desires and flourish. He is honoured in the heavently world.

11. He perpetually obtains a position that is full of wealth and food-grains. He shall be full of perfect knowledge and prosperity. He shall have pleasures for ever.

12. The Pitṛs (manes) and great-grand-fathers have been redeemed from hell by that person whose hands, feet and mind are well-controlled.

13. One who refrains from accepting monetary gifts, one who is satisfied with whatever one gets shall attain learning, penance, renown and the benefit of pilgrimage.

14-15A He who is devoid of egotism shall attain the benefit of pilgrimage. A person not conforming to the prescribed rules of a ceremony (akalpaka),* a person who does not undertake elaborate worldly activities, a person of restricted diet, a person who has conquered the sense-organs and one who is liberated from all attachments shall reap the benefit of pilgrimage.

15B-17. Even though a person has committed sins, if he frequents sacred places, is self-possessed, faithful and is calm in mind, becomes pure by pilgrimage. What then if a man of pure rites undertakes it ? The following five persons never reap the benefit of a pilgrimage viz.—a person who has no faith, a person distressed with sins, an atheist, a person whose doubts

*This appears to be a misprint as its meaning is inappropriate. Probably *akalmaṣa* i.e. 'A person devoid of sin,' may be the original reading.

are not cleared and a Hetuniṣṭha (a heretic stubbornly clinging to arguments). In a holy place the sins of sinners are absolved.

18. The Tīrtha yields the benefits as mentioned above in the case of those men whose soul is pure. If a person enters the Tīrtha after conquering lust, fury and covetousness, there is nothing which is not attained by him through the pilgrimage undertaken. Those men who move about holy centres adhering to the rules of procedure laid down (for the performance of the pilgrimage to the particular Tīrtha) are self-possessed men and can bear Dvandvas (mutually clashing opposites), go to heaven.

19. The fishes stay in the sacred rivers like Gaṅgā etc. There are flocks of birds in a temple. But since they are devoid of devotional emotions, they do not attain any benefit from the Tīrtha or the important temple.

20-21a. Hence, a person of calm and concentrated mind shall retain devotional emotion in the lotus-like heart and then resort to the Tīrthas. A Brahmacārin duly uudertakes that pilgrimage which is described, undertaken and approved of by leading sages.

21b-22. He is urged to do it by his preceptor and he has full restraint of senses. When all possessions perish, or when persons supporting him become very few or when his capacity to perform sacrifices comes to an end, a Brāhmaṇa should undertake pilgrimage and roam about the Tīrthas, after keeping Brāhmaṇas at the head, since the benefit of Yajñas is also said to be resulting from Tīrthas, by leading sages of pure nature.

23. "In regard to a person who is authorised to perform Homas and Yajñas, the house itself and all the duties of a householder are excellent. Pilgrimage to holy centres is forbidden by ancient authorities in regard to a person who maintains a householder's life thus. Some opine that even all the Tīrthas put together are not equal to Agnihotra"[1]

1. Purāṇas do not advise recourse to pilgrimage in dereliction of one's duties as a householder vide *Kūrma P.* II. 44.20, also Bm. P. quoted by *Tīrtha-Kalpataru* P. 9 (v. 23 in the NP. here is the same as in the Bm. P. mentioned above).

24. He who wishes to go on a pilgrimage should at the outset remain in a house (i.e. be a householder) with self-restraint. Staying in the house, he should maintain purity and be non negligent. Humble with devotion he should worship god Gaṇeśa.

25. The intelligent Brāhmaṇa pilgrim should propitiate Devas, Pitṛs, Brāhmaṇas and ascetics assiduously and in accordance with his affluence. After returning from the pilgrimage also he shall again worship Devas, Pitṛs and Brāhmaṇas.[1]

36. There is not the slight doubt at all in this, that he who performs thus shall get the benefit mentioned (in Śāstras).

27. He who wishes to go on pilgrimage should perform Śrāddha with ghee. It is performed for the welfare during pilgrimage. During the return journey too the Śrāddha should be performed.

28. When one is on a pilgrimage to Prayāga, one should shave off the hair on the head when father or mother is dead.[2] No one shall have the hair cut without reason.

29. If one endeavours to go to Gayā one must assiduously perform Śrāddha. He must adopt the dress of a pilgrim and perform the rite of circumambulation of the town.

30. After going to the other village, he should partake of the remnants of Śrāddha food.[3] Then he shall go ahead every day without taking any monetary gift.

31-32. At every step one takes to Gayā one gets the benefit of a horse-sacrifice.

O lady of good rites, he who rides on a bullock while going on a pilgrimage stays in the terrible hell. Indeed, the fury of the bull is terrible. From that embodied person his Pitṛs do not accept water libations.

1. VV. 24 and 25 are the same as those in Bm. P. quoted by *Tīrtha-Kalpataru* p. 9. Cf. The *Sk. P Kāśī* 6. 56-57 and the *Pd. P. Uttara* 237. 36-38, There is a great similarity (Practically unanimity) in Purāṇas about the procedure to be observed by the pilgrim.

2. The tonsure is recommended as it was believed that sins resort to the roots of the hair. *vide* v. 50 below. *Vide Pd. P. Uttara Khaṇḍa* 237. 45, *Sk. P. Kāśī* 6.65.

3. *Vide Vāyu* P. 110. 2-3 for similar instructions.

33. If any person, either because of his affluence or due to greed or delusion goes out (on a pilgrimage) in a vehicle, his pilgrimage to that sacred place becomes fruitless for him. Hence, one should avoid the use of vehicles for pilgrimage.

34. If a cow (or a bull) is used as a vehicle, it is no better than cowslaughter; if a horse is used as a vehicle, the pilgrimage becomes fruitless. If a man is used as a vehicle, the benefit shall be halved; if one undertakes journey on foot, the pilgrim has four times the benefit.

35. If there is heavy downpour or if there is scorching sunshine, one should go out with an umbrella; if the path is gravelly and thorny, one shall use a staff as a prop; if the devotee is desirous of protecting the body, he should always walk about with a shoe on.

36. After reaching the Tīrtha some-how and performing the rite of ablution, incidentally one may attain the benefit of ablution but not that of the pilgrimage.

37. He who goes on pilgrimage on another man's behalf attains a sixteenth part of the benefit. He who goes on a pilgrimage by force of circumstances derives half the benefit of pilgrimage.

38. One shall never test a Brāhmaṇa in the Tīrthas. Manu has said that a suppliant that comes here is worthy of being fed.

39. He must offer Piṇḍas with powdered fried grains, Saṁyāva (cake of wheat flour) milk pudding, Badara or Āmalaka fruits or an oil cake, O lady of beautiful eyes.

40. Śrāddha must be performed there without invoking Pitṛs by means of Ṛk Mantras (as the ancestors are already present at holy places). The material offered in the Śrāddha is not to be defiled by being seen by dogs, crows, vultures and sinners.

41-42. The Śrāddha offered in Tīrtha is conducive to the satisfaction of Pitṛs. Whether it is the proper time or not, the Tīrthaśrāddha should be done immediately on arrival. The Pitṛtarpaṇa rite must be performed always. There should not be any delay. Nor should any obstacle be put in.

43. If the image of any person made out of Kuśa grass is sunk in the water of the Tīrtha, O lady of large eyes, he derives the eighth part of the benefit.

44. (Mantra) "thou art Kuśa grass; Thou art the son of Kuśa grass. Thou wert made by Brahmā formerly. If thou takest a holy bath, he whose image is represented by the tying of this knot, also performs a holy ablution."

45. Excepting Kurukṣetra, Viśālā, Virajā and Gayā the general rule in all the Tīrthas lays down shaving of the head and observance of a fast.

46-47. Just as there are many limbs in the body but some are very important, so also some Tīrthas are very important. Now listen to the reason for the meritorious state of worldly Tīrthas. It is due to the influence of the Earth, water or fire or due to the acceptance for stay by sages that the holiness of Tīrthas is prescribed in Smṛtis.

48. O gentle lady, if any one, after reaching the Gaṅgā does not get his head shaved off, his holy rites shall be otherwise. He shall be a traitor unto the Tīrtha.

49. If any one does not get his head shaved off in the Bhāskara kṣetra i.e. Prayāga, in the Gaṅgā, he shall fall into the Raurava hell for the duration of a Kalpa along with a crore of the members of his family.

50. After reaching the Gaṅgā the excellent river, the multitudes of sins of the period of a Kalpa stay resorting to the tresses of hair. Hence, they must be cast off.

51. The devotee is honoured in the heavenly world as many thousands of years as the number of hairs and nails that fall in the waters of the Gaṅgā.

52. Excepting at Prayāga, nowhere else in the Gaṅgā is the rite of tonsure laid down. He who, out of delusion, does it otherwise, shall fall into Mahāraurava hell.

53-54. O chaste lady, a person whose father is alive shall undergo Kṣaura (shaving of the beard) rite after reaching the Tīrtha. The knower of procedure shall not shave off his moustaches. O goddess, in Gayā and other places it is not

shaving of the beard that is forbidden but only shaving of the moustache is forbidden.

55. Learned men know that the shaving of the moustaches, beard and the hair is Muṇḍana (tonsure). O lady of beautiful eyebrows, mere shaving is not tonsure as mentioned by those who know the Vedas.

CHAPTER SIXTYTHREE

The Greatness of Prayāga (Concluded)

Vasu said :

1. Listen, O Mohinī, I shall recount the glory of Prayāga as approved in the Vedas. By taking the holy bath therein in acccordance with the religious injunctions, one becomes pure.

2. Wherever one may have his plunge in the Gaṅgā, it is on a par with Kurukṣetra. It is ten times more meritorious. where it comes into contact with Vindhya (?)

3. At Kāśī it flows towards the north. It is hundred times more efficacious there. The place where the Gaṅgā mingles with the Yamunā, the daughter of the Sun-god, is hundred times more effective than at Kāśī.

4. When it flows towards the west, it is thousand time more meritorious. O gentle lady, the Gaṅgā there dispels the evil of Brahmahatyā (murder of a Brāhmaṇa) etc. by its mere sight.

5. The Gaṅgā flowing towards the west and mingling with the Kālindī (Yamunā) destroys sins accumulated in

hundreds of Kalpas. O gentle lady, it is very difficult of performance (and very auspicious) in the month of Māgha.

6. Its continuous flow of the braided currents of Gaṅgā and Yamunā coming in contact with the Earth, is said to be nectar. Even a Muhūrta (48 minutes) there in the month of Māgha is inaccessible even to the Devas.

7. During the month of Māgha, when the sun is in the the Makara (Capricorn) sign, O chaste lady, all the Tīrthas on the Earth. all meritorious cities, come to the Veṇī* (water of the confluence of the Gaṅgā and Yamunā) to take holy dip therein.

8-11. O daughter of Brahmā, all these come to the Veṇī to take their holy bath therein, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Mahādeva, Rudras, Ādityas, Maruts, Gandharvas guardians of the quarters, Yakṣas, Kinnaras, Guhyakas, all other seers of reality equipped with super-human powers (siddhis) like Aṇimā (minuteness) etc. Brahmāṇī, Pārvatī, Lakṣmī, Śacī, Medhā, Aditi, Rati, the wives of Devas, the women of Nāgas, famous celestial damsels like Ghṛtācī, Menakā Rambhā, Urvaśī, Tilottamā, Apsaras and Pitṛs come here for taking bath.

12-13A. These deities used to come down in their real form in Kṛtayuga, in the Kaliyuga they come down in disguise (in invisible form). Due to contact with the sinners, Tīrthas become black. They become white in colour once again by their holy dip at Prayāga in the month of Māgha.

13B-14. (At the time of bath the following Mantra should be recited) "O Govinda, O Acyuta, O Māhadeva, thanks to this holy bath of mine, in the month of Māgha. when the Sun is in the Capricorn, be you the bestower of benefit as mentioned in Śāstras". Uttering this Mantra and observing silence otherwise, the devotee should take the holy dip.

15-16. Again he should remember Vāsudeva, Hari, Kṛṣṇa, and Mādhava. When the sun is in Capricorn, if men

*The *Tristhalī-Setu* (p. 8) clarifies that the confluence of the Gaṅgā, Yamunā (and Sarasvatī) is called *Veṇī*.

take bath in the house with warm water, its benefit is earned only in the course of sixty years. If bath is taken outside in tanks, it yields the benefit in the course of twelve years.

17. The benefit of bath in a lake is twice that of the same in a tank and in the river it is fourfold. In a natural pond, it is tenfold and in a big river it is hundredfold.

18. In the confluence of two great rivers it is four hundred times more meritorious. These merits are increased a thousand times when the sun is in the Capricorn.

19A. When one takes a holy dip in Gaṅgā at Prayāga when the sun is in Capricorn, the same as above is reputed to be thousand times more meritorious.

19B-20a. O lady of beautiful eyes, those who take bath into the Gaṅgā in the month of Māgha, do not fall from the abode of Devas for the period of a thousand sets of four Yugas.

20B-21a. O daughter of Brahmā, if in the month of Māgha, it is hundred-times more meritorious, the bath in the confluence of the Gaṅga and Yamunā is thousand-times more meritorious.

21B-22A. O gentle lady, god Brahmā has created this Prayāga for the combustion of the burden due to multitude of sins on the Earth. He created Prayāga, out of desire for the benefit of his subjects.

22B-23A. In some places, its waters are white and in some other places its waters are black. It had been formerly created by Brahmā for the destruction of animals in the form of sins.

23B-24A. The creator has created that path to the world of Brahmā viz. the flow of the current that is white and black. It has been blended together (lit. closely strung together) by the Sarasvatī. In the Mānasa lake, the month of Māgha is the bestower of perfect knowledge but not of the benefit of salvation.

24B-25. In the holy places on the plateau of the Himālayas, the month of Māgha has been stipulated by the knowers of the Vedas as destructive of all sins and the bestower of the region of Indra (Svarga). But Māgha, the best of all months confers Mokṣa (liberation from Saṁsāra) at the forest of Badarī (Mod. Badri-Nārāyaṇa)

26. Bath in the waters of Narmadā in the month of Māgha is glorified as the destroyer of sins, remover of miseries, bestower of desired objects and conferer of stay in the region of Rudra.

27. Ablution in the waters of Sarasvatī (in the month of Māgha) annihilates multitude of sins and grants many pleasures in the world. At Viśālā[1] the month of Māgha is described as the river of extensive benefits.

28. The holy water of the Gaṅgā is a veritable forest fire for the fuel of sins. It is destructive of the necessity of staying in the womb (i.e. of taking rebirth). The holy waters are glorified as conducive to the attainment of the world of Viṣṇu and salvation.

29-30. A man who takes bath in the following rivers becomes free from sins and goes to the heavenly world. The rivers are Śarayū, Gaṇḍakī, Sindhu, Candrabhāga, (the Chenab), Kauśikī (Kuśī) Tāpi, Godāvarī, Bhīmā, Payoṣṇi (Bain-Gaṅgā), Kṛṣṇāveṇikā, (Kṛṣṇā) Kāverī, Tuṅgabhadrā and other rivers that flow into the sea.

31. The bath in the Naimiṣa in the month of Māgha yields identity of form with Viṣṇu; that in the Puṣkara lake confers nearness to Brahmā and that in Kurukṣetra bestows the world of Indra.

32. O gentle lady, in the Devahrada, the month of Māgha is the bestower of Yogic Siddhis. By taking a holy dip in Prabhāsa when the Sun is in Capricorn, one shall become Rudra's attendant.

33. By means of bath in Devikā (the lower course of Sarayū) during Māgha, a man becomes endowed with a divine body. O daughter of Brahmā, thanks to the holy dip in the Gomatī during the month of Māgha, one ceases to have rebirth.

34. The Month of Māgha is the bestower of the world of Rudra, if one stays at the following places viz. Hemakuṇḍa (or Kailāsa), Māhākāla (the famous Jyotir-liṅga at Ujjain)

1. Viśālā, the same as Vaiśāli in the Buddhist period. It is mod. Besāḍ in Muzaffarpur dist. in Bihar.

at Oṁkāra Māndhātā, (a Jyotirliṅga in the Narmadā), Nīlakaṇṭha (the Śiva Shrine, five miles north of Kathmandu, Nepal) and Arbuda (Mt. Abu).

35. During the period while the Sun is in the sign of Capricorn, the waters of rivers are conducive to the attainment of all cherished desires by performance of ablution in them. This should be noted by all clever people.

36. O daughter of Brahmā, only the blessed people reach Prayāga during the month of Māgha since the water of the confluence there which is both white and black is the bestower of non-recurrence of births.

37. Devas stationed in the heaven always do sing thus, "the month of Māgha must happen to us at Prayāga (i.e. we wish to be in Prayāga in the month of Māgha). Men who take their holy dip there at that time, do not experience the pain of being within the womb. They stay in the vicinity of Viṣṇu.

38. O daughter of the four-faced deity, formerly Māgha and Prayāga were weighed against Tīrthas, Vratas, charitable gifts, and sacrifices, in the balance. Of the two, Māgha was found to be weightier.

39. Through the holy bath at Prayāga, men attain that goal which they attain by more severe penances in which they subsist only on air, water or leaves and make the bodies emaciated or which had been practised in the course of long periods of time. They attain the same goal as is attained by the practice of Yogic exercises.

40. Swarms of bees flapped by the ears of Elephants will decorate the portals of houses of those persons who take a holy dip in the Tīrtha at Prayāga, the confluence of the divine rivers, when the Sun stays in the zodiac of Capricorn (i.e. they become rich and own many elephants.)

41. Through the holy bath in it, Prayāga fully bestows a benefit equal to that of sacrifice called Rājasūya, after destroying all sins sportively. Indeed, how is it that Prayāga cannot be described ?

42. He who takes a holy bath in the confluence of Gāṅgā and Yamunā attains merit acquired by masters of the four Vedas and habitual speakers of truth.

43. In the confluence, the devotee of praiseworthy holy vows should take ablution. He attains a benefit equal to both—Rājasūya and Aśvamedha (Horse Sacrifice).

44. The geographical area of Prayāga extends to five Yojanas. After the entry within its precincts one gains the merit of Horse-sacrifice at every step.[1]

45. O blessed lady, there are three consecrated pools and in the middle thereof is the Jāhnavī. By entering into Prayāga the sin perishes instantaneously.[2]

46. By taking a holy dip in Prayāga for a month and remaining restrained in the sense-organs, one is liberated from all sins.

47. By remaining pure in mind and body, by abjuring violence and by maintaining faith, he who takes holy bath is liberated from all sins. He shall go to the greatest region.

48-50A. There are many holy centres, spots and shrines abiding in Prayāga such as Naimiṣa, Puṣkara, Gotīrtha, Sindhu-sāgara, Gayā, Dhenuka, and the confluence of Gaṅgā and Sea. There are many sacred mountains. There are ten thousand Tīrthas and thirty crores of other shrines. These shrines stationed in Prayāga flourish day by day. They are enlightening to the mind.

50B-53. There are three Kuṇḍas of sacred fire and the Gaṅgā flows through the middle of them. It comes out from Prayāga. It is regarded as their supreme by all the Tīrthas. The divine river Yamunā, the daughter of the Sun, is well-known in the three worlds. It joins Gaṅga. It sanctifies the worlds. The other holy centres that are between Gaṅgā and Yamunā, though remembered as great in the Earth do not deserve to be even a sixteenth part of the holy centre Prayāga. Vāyu (the wind god) says that there are three and a half crores of holy shrines.

54.A They are in heaven, in firmament and in Gaṅgā.

1. The same as Mt. P. 108. 9-10, Pd. P. I 45.8.

2. NP. verse 50 below, *Mbh. Vana* 85. 73, Mt. P. 110. 4 also call these sacred spots as 'altars of sacrificial fire' (*Agni-Kuṇḍa*). The number of these *Kuṇḍas* (pools) is three even according to AP. 111-12 but *Kūrma* I. 36.28 reads 'five' *Pañca-Kuṇḍāni Rājendra yeṣām madhye tu Jāhnavī.*

54B-55. The area of Prayāga extends from Pratiṣṭhāna* upto the two Nāgas—Kambala and Aśvatara or upto Bhogavatī (the pool of Vāsuki.) This should be known as the Sacred altar of Prajāpati.[1] Assuming (physical) bodies the Vedas and sacrifices are present there.

56. O chaste lady, sages, ascetics, Devas and Cakradharas (holders of discus) worship Prajāpati by means of sacrifices.

57. O beautiful lady, there is no other holy centre more meritorious than it in the three worlds. Thanks to its power, it is superior to all other Tīrthas.

58. By visiting that greatest Tīrtha (viz Prayāga), people are liberated from all sins like the moon liberated from Rāhu.

59-60A. After going to Prayāga guarded by the Devas, a Brahmacārin (a religious student) should stay there for a month, performing Tarpaṇa rites unto the Pitṛs and the Devas. He attains desired benefits.

60B-61A. If a person even though enveloped with hundreds of sins, takes bath in the black and white waters of the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā when the Sun is in the Capricorn in the month of Māgha, he does not stay in the womb thereafter (as he is liberated from Saṁsāra thereby).

61B-62A. The Māyā pertaining to Viṣṇu is invincible. It cannot be shaken off even by the Devas. But, O daughter of Brahmā, in the month of Māgha, at Prayāga it is burned.

62B-63A. Those who take their holy dip at Prayāga in the month of Māgha, enjoy pleasures in the different worlds and get dissolved in the discus-bearing lord Viṣṇu thereafter.

63B-64. Even Citragupta does not adequately know the extent of the merit of the person who takes holy dip in the

* *Samadhiṣṭhāya* in the text is confusing. The *Mbh. Vana* 85. 76-77 from which this is a quotation reads *Sa-pratiṣṭhānam.* Hence it is adopted here. Pratiṣṭhāna is modern Jhusi near Prayāga and marks its eastern boundary. In *Tristhalī-Setu,* Pratiṣṭhāna is the name of a *Kūpa* (well) that marks the eastern boundary.

1. Quoted from *Mbh. Vana* 85. 76.77. cf. The Mt. P. 104. 5 Pd. P. I. 39. 69-70 for the sacred area of Prayāga.

Sitāsita (i.e. the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā) during the month of Māgha when the Sun is in Capricorn. Certainly, those who take holy bath in the Sitāsita during the month of Māgha attain the benefit of a thousand Rājasūya and a hundred Vājapeya sacrifices.

65. The sins accumulated by men in the course of their births ever since the beginning of the Kalpa are reduced to ashes, if they perform ablution in the Sitāsita during the month of Māgha.

66-69A. The confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā is well-known in the worlds. It is called a Kāmika Tīrtha (i.e. a holy centre where desires are realised). Whatever one may desire and whoever may desire it, it is realised by means of holy bath therein with devotion. If the devotee desires worldly pleasures he will have them. If the devotee desires a kingdom, he will get it. The heaven will be attained by one who desires it, and the person who wishes for salvation will attain salvation. There are many Tīrthas in the three worlds bestowing cherished desires. All of them resort to Prayāga when the Sun is in the Capricorn.

69B-70A. By taking holy dip in Haridvāra, Prayāga and at the confluence of meeting of Gaṅgā and the ocean, the devotee shall go to the city of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva.

70B-73A. O lady of beautiful eyes, the bath in the Sitāsita in the month of Māgha prevents the recurrence of births for hundreds and crores of Kalpas. A person who is truthful in speech, who has conquered anger, who has resorted to non-violence of the noblest type, who follows the path of virtue, who is conversant with realities, and who is engaged in what is beneficial to cows and Brāhmaṇas, shall be liberated from sins by taking bath in the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā. He attains the cherished desires in full.

73B-76. In the month of Māgha, in the Veṇī (the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā), every day one shall attain that benefit which one attains by means of charitable gifts of a thousand Bhāras of gold in Kurukṣetra during a solar eclipse. One who takes holy dip in Prayāga for three days in the month of Māgha attains that benefit which is derived when a hundred thousand cows are given away in charity. One

who takes a holy bath in Prayāga for three days in the month of Māgha, attains that benefit (merit) which one may get in three hundred years by practising Yogic exercises. O chaste lady, even by means of a thousand horse-sacrifices, one does not attain that benefit which one gets by means of taking a holy dip in Prayāga for three days in the month of Māgha.

77. Formerly, Kāñcana-mālinī[1] gave a Rākṣasa, out of love, the benefit of taking the holy dip during the month of Māgha, for three days. That sinner was liberated thereby.

78. Within three days the sins were dispelled. She attained Deva-hood by means of that merit which resulted from the holy bath for twentyseven days.

79. She became the favourite friend of Girijā (goddess Pārvatī) and sported about in Kailāsa. Thanks to the grace of Prayāga, she became one who could remember previous births.

80. Formerly, in the country of Avanti, there was a king named Vatsarāja. He went to the banks of the river Narmadā and performed the Rājasūya sacrifice.

81. Sixteen horses were used there. They were tied to as many golden sacrificial posts where they shone with gold ornaments. He too duly appeared refulgent.

82. He gave heaps of food-grains, comparable to mountains, to Brāhmaṇas. He had full faith. He was a great devotee of the deity. He bestowed cows and gold.

83. At that time there was a foolish Brāhmaṇa named Bhadraka. He was born of a base family. He worked like a husbandman. His conduct was base and lowly. He was excluded from all holy rites.

84. He was disgusted with the work of ploughing. He was deceived by his own kinsmen. Afflicted by his misfortune, he went out of his house and wandered here and there.

85. Fortunately, wisdom dawned in him and he went to Prayāga. With Mahāmāghī in view (i.e. in the month of Māgha) he took a holy bath there for three days.

1. Some episodes about the greatness of Prayāga are given in vv. 77-90. I could not trace these episodes elsewhere and am inclined to regard these names as fictitious.

86. By the mere ablution, he became sinless. He became an excellent Brāhmaṇa. Returning from Prayāga he went back to the place from where he had come.

87. The king (Vatsarāja) and this Brāhmaṇa died simultaneously. They went simultaneously and in a similar manner to the presence of the king of the Devas.

88. They had the same brilliance. They had the same comely features and strength. They had similar groups of female attendants. The ornaments, the divine vehicle, the garland of Pārijāta flowers, dance, music, everything was similar to both of them.

89-90. After seeing this, what else should I say about the greatness of this holy centre ?

O gentle lady, the month of Māgha in the Sitāsita is not equal to Rājasūya sacrifice (but is superior) to it. The confluence of the white and blue or black waters extends to twenty bow lengths.* By taking the holy dip in this during the month of Māgha one does not return to the world. But even after the Rājasūya sacrifice one is likely to return (from heavenly pleasures) to Saṁsāra.

91. Kambala and Aśvatara are two serpents lying on the extensive banks of the Yumunā.** By taking bath there and drinking the water thereof one is liberated from all sins.

92. After going to that spot of the intelligent Mahādeva a man redeems ten previous and ten subsequent generations.

93-94. There is a well there which is well-known by the name of Pratiṣṭhāna. The devotee should take bath there and perform Tarpaṇa rites for Pitṛs and Devas with full mental control. He must conquer anger. He who thus stays here for three nights, shall be purified of all sins. He shall derive the benefit of a horse-sacrifice.

95-96. To the north of Pratiṣṭhāna and to the east of Bhāgīrathī, there is a Tīrtha named Haṁsapratapana. It is well-known in all the worlds. By the mere ablution

*This is the *Veṇī Kṣetra* in Prayāga according to *Pd. P. Sitāsita* is also called *Veṇī*.

**The reading in Pd. P.I. 43.27 is *Yamunā dakṣiṇe-taṭe* 'on the south bank of Yamunā'.

therein, the benefit of a horse-sacrifice is derived. He is honoured in the heaven as long as the moon and the sun shine.

97-98. Thereafter, he should go to Bhogavatī, to the north of Vāsuki that is remembered as the greatest Tīrtha named Daśāśvamedhika. By the rite of ablution therein, the devotee derives the benefit of a horse-sacrifice. He becomes rich, handsome, and a liberal and virtuous donor.

99. By going to that place, one attains that benefit which a master of the four Vedas obtains, which those who speak truth derive, and which one attains as a result of nonviolence.

100. On the northern bank of the Pāyati (?) and to the south of Prayāga, there is the Tīrtha named Ṛṇamocanaka. It is remembered as the greatest holy centre.

101. One who spends a night there and takes a holy dip therein, is liberated from all indebtedness. He attains the heavenly world. He becomes immortal himself.

102. He who takes bath and misses three meals and continues like this for three months, is purified of sins of betrayal of confidence. (Within three months, he becomes pure).

103. By glorifying the holy centre, the devotee obtains merit, by visiting it he sees auspicious things, by plunging in and drinking its waters, he sanctifies upto the seventh generation.

104. When the sun is in Capricorn, during the month of Māgha, if one does not take bath before the sunrise how can one be liberated from sins? How can one go to heaven ?

105. One shall shave off one's head at Prayāga, one shall offer Piṇḍas into the Gaṅgā. One shall give charitable gifts at Kurukṣetra, one shall eschew body at Vārāṇasī.

106. If one has shaved off the head at Prayāga of what avail is offerings of Piṇḍas at Gayā,[1] or death at Kāśī or the giving of charitable gifts at Kurukṣetra ?

1. This is a misprint for 'Gaya' as can be seen from the quotation of this verse in *Tīrtha-cintāmaṇi*, p. 32 and elsewhere. For offering *Piṇḍas* at Gayā is unanimously recommended.

107. If the year is not over after a pilgrimage and the shortage is upto two months, the pilgrim shall assiduously perform the rites of tonsure and observance of fast again.

108. In regard to all the women who go to Prayāga, the rite of tonsure shall be performed thus. All the hairs are collected together and two Aṅgulas at the tip are cut off.[1]

109. All the sins of persons cling to the roots of hairs and stay there even after the holy dip in the Tīrtha. Hence they must be shaved off.

110-111A. (?) If the new moon day, Śravaṇa constellation and Arkapāta (the fall of the Sun ? sunset ?) coincide in the month of Pauṣa or Māgha it should be known as Ardhodaya Parva. It is superior to a hundred solar festive occasions.

O daughter of Brahmā, if it is slightly less (in these respects), it is remembered as Mahodaya Parva.

111B-112. If one is able to be at Prayāga at the time of dawn on the seventh day in the bright half of the month of Māgha, it is on a par with a thousand solar eclipses. If (one is at Prayāga) during the tropical transit of the sun, the merit is a crore times more. During the equinoxes the merit is a hundred thousand times more.

113. During the Ṣaḍaśīti* (meritorious hour) the benefit is a thousand times more. So also in the case of Viṣṇupadī** (meritorious hour). One shall give charitable gifts at Prayāga in accordance with the extent of one's resources.

114-117. O daughter of Brahmā, thereby the benefit from the Tīrtha increases. If any one wishes to offer a cow at the confluence of the Gaṅgā and Yamunā, he must offer as Pratigraha (gift) a gold piece, a jewel or a pearl. O auspicious

1. This is called *Veṇī-dāna*, Even women whose husbands are alive offer the tresses of their hair measuring two Aṅgulas, to the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā (called *Veṇi*).

*The sun's entrance into the four signs viz. Pisces, Gemini, Virgo and Sagittarius.

**The sun's passage into the zodiacal signs of Taurus, Leo, Scorpio and Aquarius.

lady, if any one wishes to give a reddish, brown or a tawny coloured cow, he must cover its horns with gold, the hoofs with silver and the neck with a cloth. It must be a milch cow with a calf. It must be given to a Vedic Scholar in accordance with the injunctions. He must be a good-mannered person wearing white clothes, quiescent, knower of Dharma and a master of the Vedas. That cow must be given at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā.

118-120. Costly clothes and different kinds of jewels (too must be given). The devotee if honoured in the heavenly world as many thousand years as there are hairpores in the bodies of the cow and the calf. The cow too is born there where the donor takes his rebirth. Thanks to that rite, the donors do not see hell. They reach the northern Kurus and rejoice for long periods of time.

121. It is better to give a milch cow than hundreds and thousands of dry cows. That cow alone will redeem the wife, sons and servants of the donor.

122-123A. Hence among all charitable gifts, the gift of a cow is specially praiseworthy. It is the cow alone that protects one in impassable, dangerous, terrible transmission of great sins. Hence the cow should be given as a gift to an excellent Brāhmaṇa.

123B-125A. One shall not accept monetary gifts in Tīrthas and holy shrines. As long as that amount (in case he has accepted) remains with him and he benefits by it, the holy centre is of no avail to him. When there are special indications and portents, the Brāhmaṇa shall guard himself against mistakes in his own activities and in those pertaining to the Pitṛs (Such as Śrāddha) as well as in the worship of the deities.

125B-126. He who makes a gift of a virgin (i e. gives her in marriage) on the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā does not see the terrible hell, thanks to that rite. He goes to the northern Kurus and rejoices for long endless periods of time.

127-129A. He obtains wives and righteous sons endowed with handsome features.

(Special austerities). A man who stands topsy-turvy with outstretched arms and inhales smoke from below is honoured in the heavenly world for a hundred thousand years. Falling from the heavenly abode, the man becomes an Agnihotrin. After enjoying extensive pleasures, he attains that same holy centre once again.

129B-130. (This holy sacred place and sphere of Prajāpati has the following boundaries :) Prayāga* extends from Pratiṣṭhāna up to the deep pool of Vāsuki in front of Prajāpati and up to the two Nāgas Kambala and Aśvatara and the Nāga Bahumūlaka. This is known in the three worlds as the sacred spot of Prajāpati.

131. By taking the holy bath there, people go to heaven. Those who are dead there are not reborn. Not only through the words of the Vedas but through the popular saying this is justified.

132. The soul goes up in its flight as a result of the death in Prayāga. There are ten thousand Tīrthas and another sixty crores.

133-134A. O daughter of Brahmā, their presence at that place is glorified. He who abandons his life at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā attains the goal which a practising Yogin who is intelligent and who traverses the path of the good, attains.

134B-136. A man may be oppressed, afflicted, indigent or furious. But if he eschews life after reaching the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā, he rejoices in the heaven in the midst of Gandharvas and Apsaras. He goes there on aerial chariots having the lustre and colour of molten gold and the refulgence of the Sun. He attains all cherished desires, so say the leading sages.

137. From slumber he is wakened by means of songs and sounds of musical instruments. He is honoured in heaven as long as he does not remember about the birth.

**Prayāgāt*—in the text means 'from Prayāga'. If emended as *ā-Prayāgam* as found in the same verses in the *Mt. P.* 104.5 and *Pd. P.* I.39 69-70 it gives better sense. The reading in Mt. P. is accepted in the above translation.

138. When his Karmans are exhausted and he falls from heaven, he comes back (to the world of human beings) and is born in a family that is rich and flourishing and that is full of gold and jewels.

139-141. Remembering the same thing he goes to the world of Viṣṇu. He who abandons life after reaching the root of the ('Eternal') banyan tree goes beyond all the worlds to the world of Rudra. The twelve Ādityas (Suns) shine there resorting to Rudra. The entire universe comes out (?). He burns at the root of the banyan tree* (?). O gentle lady, lord Hari honoured and kept in front by Prajāpati lies down on its leaf in the form of an infant child sucking the big toe.

142-144A. Listen to the benefit attained by the person who abandons his life in the beautiful bank of the river Urvaśī (Urvaśī-pulina) which is large and whitened like swans (due to the presence of flocks of Swans. O daughter of Brahmā, for sixtysix thousand years he shall stay in the heavenly world along with his Pitṛs.

144B-146. O lady of beautiful eyes, when he sees Urvaśī in the divine world, he is honoured continuously by the Devas, sages, Gandharvas and Kinnaras. Thereafter, when the Karmans are exhausted and he falls from the heaven he comes here (on the Earth). He obtains a hundred beloved wives like Urvaśī. He shall be the husband of many thousands of women amidst whom he sports.

147. O Mohinī, he shall be the enjoyer and administrator of ten thousand villages. He is wakened from his sleep (every day) by the sounds of girdles and anklets.

148-149. After enjoying extensive pleasures, he attains the same Tīrtha once again. Perpetually wearing white clothes

*The text in NP : *nirgacchanti jagat sarvaṁ vaṭa-mūle sa dahyate* / translated above is not satisfactory. We should rather accept the reading *vaṭamūlaṁ na dahyate* / given in the Mt. P. 105.12b. It means (although at the end of the world, the 12 suns resorting to Rudra burn down the whole universe the Banyan tree (on which Viṣṇu is to rest as a child) is not burnt.

and invariably subjugating the sense-organs, he takes only one meal a day. By continuing thus for a month he becomes the lord of Yoga. He obtains a hundred women bedecked in gold.

150-151A. He will be the master of great pleasures over the Earth extending up in the oceans. He shall be endowed with wealth and food-grains. He will be a donor continuously.

After enjoying extensive pleasures, he remembers that Tīrtha once again.

151b-153a. He who abandons life after reaching the holy place called 'Koṭitīrtha' is honoured in the heavenly world for a thousand crores of years. Thereafter, when the Karmans are exhausted, the excellent man comes here from heaven and is born in a family that is highly praiseworthy and endowed with gold, jewels and pearls. He is born a handsome person.

153b-154. Willingly or unwillingly he who dies in Gaṅgā, attains the abode of Śakra. He never goes to hell. He rides in an aerial chariot to which swans and Sārasa birds are yoked.

155-156a. He sleeps in the midst of Apsaras and is wakened by them. O daughter of Brahmā when the karmans are exhausted, he comes here from heaven. He chooses his birth in the family of Yogins and prosperous peoples.

156b-159a. A person who is not short of any limb, who is free from ailments and who has all the five sense-organs functioning perfectly shall immolate himself in the fire of dried cowdung cakes at the confluence of Gaṅgā and Yamunā. He is honoured in the heavenly world for as many thousands of years as there are pores of hairs in the body of that intelligent devotee. Falling from heaven thereafter he becomes the lord of Jambūdvīpa. After enjoying extensively many pleasures he attains the same Tīrtha once again.

159b-161. He who chops off his own body and gives it to birds, is honoured in the Somaloka (world of the moon) for a hundred thousand years. Thereafter, he comes here from that world and becomes a righteous king endowed with all good

qualities, comely features and learning. He speaks pleasing words and he remains pure. After enjoying extensive pleasures, he goes again to the same Tīrtha.

162-163. A person who has adopted holy observance Anāśaka (non destructive) and who dies anywhere in the area of Prayāga which extends to five Yojanas, redeems seven previous generations and fourteen subsequent generations. He uplifts himself.

164-166. There is a Tīrtha well-known as Agnitīrtha on the southern bank of Yamunā. On the Western bank is the Tīrtha of Dharmarāja known as Naraka.

165. By taking holy bath therein people go to heaven. Those who die there are not reborn. On the northern bank of Yamunā, there are many Tīrthas that destroy sins, O daughter of Brahmā. They are resorted to by prominent sages. Those who take holy dip there go to heaven. Those who die there are not reborn.

167. Gaṅgā and Yamunā are remembered as yielding similar fruits. Only because of its seniority, Gaṅgā is worshipped everywhere.

168-169a. O lady of Devas, Yogic power may or may not be attained by one who gives all jewels to the Brāhmaṇas. But surely all these befall a person who dies at Prayāga.

169b-172. One may be in one's own land, or in a forest, or in a foreign country or in his house. If he dies remembering Prayāga, he attains the world of Brahmā where the ground is golden. There are trees that yield all cherished desires, as their fruit. There are sages there. He sports about along with Siddhas and Gandharvas in the auspicious and beautiful bank of Mandākinī (Gaṅgā). He is worshipped by Devas. Thereafter, he comes here and becomes the lord of Jambūdvīpa.

173-174. He is a righteous soul and is fully endowed with all good qualities. He attains the same holy Tīrtha once again. Thus the entire greatness of Prayāga has been described to you. It is conducive to happiness and salvation. What other essence do you wish to hear ?

CHAPTER SIXTYFOUR

The greatness of Kurukṣetra[1].

Mohinī said :

1. O merciful Vasu, O knower of virtue, the greatness of Prayāga, the king of Tīrthas, has been narrated to me by you who are deeply erudite.

2. Now recount full details of the splendid Kurukṣetra which is the most auspicious of all important Tīrthas and which sanctifies all the worlds.

Vasu said :

3. Listen, O Mohinī, I shall narrate to you the details of Kurukṣetra which bestows great merits. By going there and taking the holy dip, a man is liberated from all sins.

4. There are many holy centres there resorted to by the leading sages. They bestow salvation to those who listen. I shall recount them to you.

5. Liberation is of four types : Viz : knowledge of the Brahman, Śrāddha at Gayā, death while defending cattle and residence at Kurukṣetra.

6. They call the land between the two divine rivers Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī 'Brahmāvarta', a land resorted to by the Devas.[2]

7. He who continuously says thus :— "Although I stay far off, I will go to Kurukṣetra and stay there", is liberated from all sins.[3]

1. Kurukṣetra or the land of Kurus is a very sacred region. Since Vedic times, it was the cradle of Aryan civilisation. As recorded in the opening verse of the BG., Kurukṣetra was originally a *dharma-kṣetra* as gods, sages and kings have performed sacrifices in the area on the banks of Sarasvatī. Its area is much wider than the place now called Kurukṣetra as it includes Thaneswar, Sonepat, Amin, Asthipur etc. De, p. 110.

2. *Mbh. Vana* 83. 3, 204-205 records that the land between the Sarasvati and the Dṛṣad-vati is Kurukṣetra. Manu II. 17 calls this tract Brahmāvarta.

3. A *verbatim* echo of the sentiment expressed in *Mbh. Vana* 83. 1-2.

8 There is no doubt about this that the knowledge of the self-possessed learned person who stays on the banks of the Sarasvatī will be full of Brahman.

9. O gentle lady, the deities, sages and Siddhas resort to Kurujāṅgala[1] (the forest in Kurukṣetra). By resorting to that place, one realises Brahman in his Ātman.

Mohini said :

10. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, how is Kurukṣetra superior to all other Tīrthas ? Recount it in detail to me. I have sought refuge in you.

Vasu said :

11. O splendid lady, listen. I shall recount to you the details of Kurukṣetra that yields great benefit. I shall tell you how it has become one that burns the sins of men and is a favourite of Brahmā.

12. At that holy spot, the meritorious Brahmasaras (the lake of Brahmā) came into being at the outset. Then the Rāmahrada (deep pool of Paraśurāma) came into being and thereafter Kurukṣetra (the land ploughed by King Kuru.)[2]

13. The lake nearby was created by Brahmā formerly. Moreover, the altar of Brahmā is in between the quarters.

14. O Mohinī, penance was performed here by Brahmā who was desirous of creation (of the universe). Penance was performed by the discus-bearing Hari also who was desirous of sustaining the worlds.

1. *Vāmana P.* 22.47 regards the region between Sarasvati and Dṛṣadvati as Kurujāṅgala. Formerly, there must have been some forests in Kurukṣetra but now no jungle is there. Mbh. Ādi 94-49 identifies Kurukṣetra and Kurujāṅgala with Hastināpura as its capital.

2. Vāmana P. 22.59-60 confirms that originally this tract of land was called the *Vedī* (sacrificial altar) of Brahmā. Later, when Paraśurāma filled five pools with blood of Kṣattriyas, it became known as *Rāmahrada* (or *Syamanta* or *Samanta Pañcaka*); lastly when king Kuru, the son of Saṁvaraṇa ploughed this land with a golden plough for fourteen miles all round, it came to be known as Kurukṣetra 'The farm-land of Kuru.'

15A. Thanks to the entry into the lake, Sthāṇutva (the state of being steady like a pillar) was attained by Śambhu also.

15B-17A. O beautiful woman, Paraśurāma was enraged because his father had been slain. (By way of revenge) he killed the Kṣatriyas unfavourable to Brāhmaṇas. Pools of blood were made by him. He performed the rite of Tarpaṇa to the Pitṛs with that blood and performed a penance there. Thereafter, it became famous as Rāmatīrtha.[1] It became destructive of sins.

17B-18. In the place where sage Mārkaṇḍeya performed a great penance, the river Sarasvatī originating from the Plakṣa tree flowed. The river was welcomed, honoured and eulogised by the righteous sage.

19-20. The river flooded the lake nearby and flowed to the West. The place all around extending to five Yojanas was ploughed by Kuru as cultivable land.[2] The area upto Syamantapañcaka is cited as Kurukṣetra. It is the source of (qualities like) mercy, truthfulness and forgiveness.

21. O gentle lady, men who take holy dip here obtain everlasting merit. Those who die here ride in an aerial chariot and go to the world of Brahmā.

22. No doubt need be entertained in this respect that observance of fast, charitable gifts, Homa, Japa and worship of the lord in this place attain everlasting benefit.

23-24. Those who die at Brahmavedī (the pulpit or altar of Brahmā) in Kurukṣetra are not reborn. Planets, stars

1. Rāmahrada is a lake at a distance of one mile from Kurukṣetra station. Its area is 3546 ft. (length) X 1900 (breadth). It was originally known as Brahmasaras as god Brahmā performed penance on its bank. Paraśurāma performed the *Tarpaṇa* of his *Pitṛs* here and hence it is called Rāmahrada. De (P. 166) is wrong in identifying *Dvaipāyanahrada* with it as that lake (also known as Pārāśara) is at a distance of 20 miles from Thanesar.

2. That the extent of Kurukṣetra is five Yojanas in radius is confirmed in the *Mbh. Vana* 129-22 and *Vāmana P.* 22.15-16. Sya (Sa-) mantapañcaka or Rāmahrada forms the boundary of Kurukṣetra. This specific area was advised as proper for the battlefield by Balarāma (*Mbh. Śalya* 55. 5-18).

and other luminaries have the fear of falling off after some time, but there is no fall in regard to those who die in Kurukṣetra. Hence, even Devas, sages, Siddhas and Gandharvas are eager to resort to that lake.

25-26. The holy spot is called Rantuka. O auspicious lady, the following guards were settled here by Viṣṇu for protecting the holy centre. They are :— Sucandra, Yakṣa, Rākṣasa, Sūrya, Vāsuki, Sukeśin and Vidyādhara, Śambukarṇaka.

27. With their servants whose number goes upto eight thousand and who bear bows and arrows, they protect Kurukṣetra and prevent sinners.

28. After reaching Rantuka,[1] the devotee should crave forgiveness again and again. He should take a holy dip in Sarasvatī, visit Yaksa Rantuka and bow to him. After offering flowers, incense and Naivedya, he should utter the following :

29-30A. "O leading Yakṣa, it is thanks to your favour that I could wander over forests, rivers and Tīrthas. Let there be no obstacle therein. Obeisance to you".

30B. After craving forgiveness and propitiating the leading Yakṣa thus, the devotee shall start on his pilgrimage.

31-32. O Mohinī, there is no shortage or deficiency in this world or in the other world in regard to that person who makes a pilgrimage to the forests, Tīrthas and rivers of Kurukṣetra. The pilgrimage yields merits.

1. Rantuka is probably (as opined by Cunningham in *Arch. Survey Report* for India II. P. 215) the Ratan Jaksha situated at the north-east corner of Kurukṣetra, four miles to the east of Thanesar.

CHAPTER SIXTYFIVE

Pilgrimage to Kurukṣetra

Mohini said :—

1. O leading Brāhmaṇa, what are the forests there ? What are the splendid rivers ? Kindly recount to me the pilgrimage that bestows Siddhi.

2. Mention to me the Tīrthas that are present in Kurukṣetra that yields merit, since you are my preceptor and bestower of salvation.

Vasu said :—

3. O Mohinī, listen. I shall recount to you the rules of procedure for undertaking the pilgrimage of Kuruksetra. It bestows merit. By undertaking the pilgrimage, the devotee attains excellent salvation.

4-7. In the middle of Kuruksetra there are seven holy forests.[1] I shall mention their names as they are bestowers of merit on men : 1) the Kāmyakavana is meritorious. 2) the Aditivana is very big. 3) Vyāsa's forest is sacred. 4) So also is Phalakīvana. 5) The Sūryavana is holy. 6) Madhuvana is equally meritorious. 7) Sītāvana is famous and is destructive of sins. Thus there are seven forests here. There are many Tīrthas. The river Sarasvatī is holy. So also is the river Vaitaraṇī. Gaṅgā, Mandākinī (flowing slowly) is also meritorious.

8-9. Another river is Madhusravā. Dṛṣadvatī, Kauśikī and Hairaṇvatī are also sacred.[2] Excepting Sarasvatī all these rivers are flooded during the rainy season. The waters of these rivers are holy for touching, drinking and plunging.

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1. The *Vāmana* P. 34-37 confirms the list of seven forests in Kurukṣetra as given by NP. here. But today there is no trace of a single forest, though the names of some villages (e. g. *Kamodā for Kāmyakavana, Pharal* for Phalakī-vana) are popularly believed to be the sites of those forests.

2. The *Vāmana P.* 39. 6-8 confirms this list of so-called rivers. Today even the great Sarasvatī of Vedic and Purāṇic fame has a bare existence. V. 10a below euphemistically suggests that these rivers were dry even in the days of the Nārada Purāṇa.

10A. These rivers are not frothy and foaming in view of the greatness of the sacred holy centre.

10B-11A. The devotee should first go to Rantuka and pay respects to that Yakṣa, the extremely powerful gatekeeper. Only then the pilgrim should begin his pilgrimage.

11B-13A. Thereafter, O auspicious lady, the man should go to the holy Aditivana.[1] It was here that a great penance was duly performed by Aditi for obtaining sons. By taking holy dip and worshipping Aditi, the mother of the Devas, the lady-devotee gives birth to a great and heroic son endowed with all auspicious characteristic features.

13B-16A. Thereafter, O fair lady, the pilgrim should go to the excellent spot of Viṣṇu that is famous by the name of Vimala.[2] Lord Hari is present here. By taking holy dip in Vimala and by visiting lord of Vimala the devotee should become (free from impurities). He shall attain the world of discus-bearing lord of the Devas. O Mohini, there is no doubt about this that by visiting Hari and Baladeva occupying one and the same seat, the devotee shall immediately be liberated from sins.

16B-17. Thereafter, the devotee should go to the Tīrtha Pāriplava[3] wellknown in the worlds. By taking holy dip there and drinking its waters as well as by propitiating a Brāhmaṇa who has mastered the Vedas, by means of monetary gifts etc., the devotee shall derive the benefit of Brahma-Yajña.

18. By devoutly taking a holy dip in the place where the sin-destroying confluence of the Kauśikī[4] is present,

1. Now there is no jungle but it is believed that its site was near the village Amin where there is Aditi Tirtha. Amin is at a distance of 5 miles from Kurukṣetra on the Delhi-Ambala line *Kalyāṇa-Tīrthāṅka*, p. 78).

2. Now-a-days a small eminence near Viṣṇupada is called Vimala and is regarded as the hermitage of sage Vimala (*Kalyāṇa* 31. 1 P. 82) but at the time of the NP. both Viṣṇupada and Vimala seem to have been identical.

3. Mentioned as a famous Tirtha at Kurukṣetra in *Mbh. Vana.* 83.12 and in VmP. (*Vāmana P.*) 34.17.

4. This is a different river from modern Kosi and the one mentioned in Gayā-māhātmya. Its confluence with the Dṛṣadvatī is regarded as holy in VmP. 34.18 and the same confluence is implied here.

O splendid lady, the man attains union with his beloved ones.

19. Thereafter, the man endowed with forbearance should go to the Pṛthivītīrtha and devoutly take holy dip. Thereby, O blessed lady, he attains excellent salvation.

20. The goddess (Earth) forgives the offences committed by a man on the Earth, if that embodied soul takes his holy dip there.

21. By visiting Śiva, the lord of Dakṣa in the holy hermitage Dakṣāśrama, the man obtains the benefit of a horse-sacrifice.

22. Thereafter, the devotee shall go to Śālakinī. After taking a holy dip there, he should worship Hari in communion with Hara, for achieving the desired object.

23. The devotee who knows rules of procedure should go to Nāgatīrtha and take holy dip there. By taking in ghee and curds thereafter, he shall attain freedom from the fear of serpents.

24. Thereafter, he should return in the evening to the shrine of Rantuka. Staying there for a night, the devotee should worship the getekeeper on the next day.

25. The next day he should worship a Brāhmaṇa receiving him with scents and other articles of service and then feed him. Thereafter, he should go to the Tīrtha, Pañcanada, well known in the three worlds.

26-27A. It was here that Śiva gave out five loud shouts that terrified the Asuras. Hence, the holy centre is famous by the name Pañcanada. It is destructive of all sins. By taking a holy dip there and making charitable gifts, the man becomes fearless.

27B-29A. Thereafter, he should go to Koṭitīrtha, O Mohinī, where a crore of Tīrtha were brought as installed by Rudra the Great Ātman. By taking the holy dip in that Tīrtha and by visiting Hara, Koṭīśvara (the lord of crores) the devotee shall attain the merit originating from five Yajñas ever since that day.

29B-30A. It was here alone that lord Vāmana was installed by all Devas.

30B. Hence by worshipping him the devotee shall derive the benefit of Agniṣṭoma sacrifice.

31A. Thereafter, he should go to Aśvitīrtha. By having faith and mastering sense-organs as well as by taking holy dip therein, the man shall become renowned and handsome.

31B-32A. Then he should go to the Varāhatīrtha created by Viṣṇu. By taking holy dip therein with faith, the man shall attain good goal.

32B-33. Thereafter, O fairfaced lady, he should go to Soma tīrtha[1] where Soma (the moon) performed penance and became free from ailments. The devotee should like his holy plunge therein. By giving a cow as gift there, he shall attain the benefit of Rājasūya sacrifice.

34. By worshipping Bhuteśvara, Jvālāmāleśvara and Tāṇḍaliṅga, the devotee shall never have rebirth.

35. By taking a holy dip in Ekahaṁsa, the man shall attain the benefit of charitable gift of a thousand cows. By taking holy bath in Kṛtaśauca the man shall attain the benefit of sacrifice called Puṇḍarīka

36. Thereafter, the devotee should go to the holy centre of the trident-bearing lord, called muñja-vaṭa. By observing fast for a night and worshipping Īśa he shall be the lord of Gaṇas.

37. The devotee should propitiate the female Yakṣiṇī stationed at the threshold by observing fast, taking the holy dip and worshipping. For quelling great sins, he should feed the Brāhmaṇas.

38. He shall circumambulate them. Thereafter, he shall go to Puṣkara. By taking a bath and by worshipping the Pitṛs, he shall have his objects accomplished.

39. If any one offers the gift of a virgin (i.e. if he gives a virgin away in marriage) there on the fullmoon day of Kārttika, the deities will be delighted and give him the desired benefit.

1. It is probably the tank to the South of Amin mentioned also in the *Mbh. Vana* 83.114, VmP. 41.4.

Many of the sub-Tīrthas mentioned in the NP. are the same as in the *Mbh. Vana* and also in *VmP.* In fact many lines are borrowed *verbatim* from Mbh. by NP. Thus *NP.* V. 35=*Mbh Vana* 83. 20b-21a, NP. V. 36=*Mbh. Vana* 83. 21b-22a. Such borrowings are found in all Purāṇas.

40. Kapila, the great Yakṣa, is stationed here as the gate-keeper. He creates obstacles in the commission of sins (to the sinners). He grants merit too.

41-42A His highly blessed wife Ūkhalamekhalā continuously beats the Dundubhi drum and wanders every where. She prevents sinners from taking bath. She leads the meritorious ones.

42B-43 Thereafter, the devotee shall go to Rāmahrada.[1] By taking a holy dip therein duly and by worshipping the Devas, Pitṛs and sages the devotee shall attain worldly pleasuses and liberation. By worshipping Paraśurāma faithfully and by making gift of gold, the devotee shall become rich.

44. By going to Vaṁśamūla Tīrtha and by taking the holy bath therein, the devotee shall uplift his own race. By taking the holy dip in Kāyaśodhanaka (that which purifies the body) the devotee's body shall become pure and he shall enter Hari.

45. The devotee shall go to Lokoddhāra. By taking bath and worshipping Janārdana, he shall attain the permanent world where the eternal Viṣṇu abides.

46. He should then go to Śrītīrtha and after taking bath should worship the excellent Śālagrāma. Thereby, he sees Hari present continuously near him.

47. After reaching Kapilahrada, he should take a holy bath and worship Devas and Pitṛs. Thereby, he derives the merit of a thousand tawny-coloured cows.

48. By duly worshipping Kapila, the lord of the universe, O gentle lady, the devotee shall be duly greeted by Devas and he shall derive the region of Śiva himself.

49. Thereafter, observing fast, he should worship the sun in the Sūryatīrtha. After attaining the benefit of Agniṣṭoma sacrifice, he shall go to heaven.

1. This is to the north of Thaneswar, *Mbh. Vana* 83. 26-40 tells us that originally five tanks were filled with the blood of Kṣattriyas by Paraśurāma for the *Tarpaṇa* to his ancestors and at his request they transformed them into Tīrthas; also vide *Pd.* P. I. 26. 23-37.

50. Gaṇapati himself is stationed at the entrance to a crevice into the Earth. By visiting him and duly worshipping him, the devotee shall attain the benefit of a Yajña.

51. By taking a holy dip in the Tīrtha of Goddess, a man obtains excellent features. By taking holy dip Brahmāvarta, a man attains perfect knowledge of the Brahman.

52. By taking holy dip in Sutīrthaka and by worshipping Devas, sages, Pitṛs and human beings, a man obtains the benefit of a horse-sacrifice.

53. By performing holy bath in the Tīrtha of Kāmeśvara with faith, the devotee shall be liberated from all ailments. He shall attain the eternal Brahman.

54. By taking a holy dip and worshipping with faith in the Mātṛtīrtha the family flourishes till the eleventh generation. Excellent prosperity increases.

55. Thereafter, the devotee should go to Śītāvana.[1] O auspicious lady, there is a great Tīrtha there. By its mere vision, it sanctifies twenty-one generations.

56-57. By casting off the tresses of hair there, the devotee becomes liberated from sins. The Tīrtha named Daśāśvamedhika is well known in all the three worlds. By seeing that Tīrtha one shall be liberated from sins. Thereafter, he shall go to the Tīrtha called Mānuṣa[2] and take the holy bath.

58-59. O daughter of god Brahmā, if one wishes for a human birth once again one shall take bath in the Tīrtha Mānuṣa. The river Mahānadī three kilometres from the Mānuṣa Tīrtha is well known. After taking bath there in accordance with the injunctions, the devotee should feed excellent Brāhmaṇa on Śyāmāka rice cooked in milk.

60-61A. His sins perish. He attains salvation by performing the rite of Śrāddha to the Pitṛs. At midday on the fourteenth day during the Pitṛpakṣa (the dark fortnight dedicated to the

1. Probably the same as *Śītā-Vana* mentioned as the seventh holy forest in Kurukṣetra in VmP. 34. 7. The village *Sīvana* is supposed to be on its site. Sītā, the queen of Rāma, has no association with Kurukṣetra as per VR.

2. It is also glorified in VmP. 35. 50-56, Pd. P. I. 26. 60-63.

manes) called Mahālaya in the month of Bhādra-pada, the devotee shall offer Piṇḍas. Thereby, he shall attain liberation.

61B-62A. Thereafter, he should go to Brahmā's spot Brahmodumbaraka. He who takes a holy dip in the pools of Brahmarṣis (Brahmanical sages) obtains the benefit of Somayāga.

62B-63A. By worshipping Sthāṇu accompanied by Daṇḍin in the Tīrtha called Vṛddhakedāraka the man attains the power of vanishing at will.

63B-64A. Thereafter, the devotee should go to Kalaśī where the goddess herself is present. By taking a holy dip here and worshipping Ambikā, one shall cross the ocean of worldly existence.

64B-65. By visiting lord Maheśvara at Saraka[1] on the fourteenth day in the dark half of the month, the man endowed with faith, shall attain the region of Śiva. O beautiful lady, there are three classes of Tīrthas at Saraka.

66-67A. The Rudrakoṭi (the crore of Rudras) is stationed in the well in the middle of the lake. The man who takes bath in that lake and remembers Rudrakoṭī is meritorious. There is no doubt about this that Rudrakoṭi it worshipped by him.

67B-69A. There is another Tīrtha there itself, viz. Īhāspapadam (Basis for desire). It is destructive of sins. By its mere sight a man attains liberation. By worshipping Devas and Pitṛs, the man wards off mishaps. He shall obtain everything mentally thought of.

69B-70A. There is a great Tīrtha called Kedāra. It is destructive of all sins. By taking a holy bath there, the man shall achieve the benefit of all gifts.

70B-71A. There is a great lake of very clear water to the east of Saraka. It is well known by the name "Anyajanma" (another birth), where the lord Hari and Hara are present. Viṣṇu stands there in his four-armed form, while Śiva abides there in the form of a Liṅga. By performing holy ablution there in visiting and eulogising the deity, the man obtains liberation.

1. Also glorified in *Mbh. Vana* 83. 75-76, Pd. P.I. 26.76.

71B-73A. Thereafter, the devotee shall go to Nāgahrada and take a holy dip towards the end of the bright half of the month of Caitra. By offering Śrāddha, he attains liberation. He never sees the world of Yama.

73B-75. Thereafter, the devotee shall go to the Tīrtha Triviṣṭapa that is resorted to by the Devas. There is a holy river Vaitaraṇī there. It liberates one from sins. By taking a holy dip and worshipping the trident-bearing and bull-emblemed deity, he shall purify his soul of all sins. He will definitely attain the greatest goal (Mokṣa). By taking holy dip in the Rasāvarta the man attains excellent Siddhi.

76. On the fourteenth day in the bright half of the month of Caitra, the devotee should take a holy dip in the Vilepaka and worship Śiva devoutly. Thereby he is liberated from all sins.

77. Thereafter, O gentle lady, the man should go to the excellent Phalakīvana[1] where Devas perform great penance along with the Gandharvas.

78. By taking a holy dip in the river Dṛṣadvatī there in accordance with the injunctions and by performing the rite of Tarpaṇa to the Devas and Pitṛs. the man shall attain the benefit of Agniṣṭoma and Atirātra sacrifices.

79. On the new-moon day or on Lunar-day (Full-moon day (?) the man shall perform Śrāddha rite there. He attains an excellent benefit thereby on a par with that of Gayāśrāddha.

80A. That is the benefit of the Śrāddha. The remembrance of the forest yields satisfaction to the Pitṛs.

80B-81A. Thereafter, the devotee shall go to the Tīrtha Pāṇighāṭa and perform the rite of Tarpaṇas to the Pitṛs. Thereby he attains the benefit of Rājasūya and of Sāṅkhya and Yoga as well.

81B-82A. Then the man should perform bath in the Tīrtha Miśraka in accordance with the injunctions. Thereby he attains the benefit of all the Tīrthas and attains excellent salvation.

1. There is no jungle now, but the village Pharal is regarded as the site of *Phalakī Vana.*

82B-83A. Thereafter he should go to Vyāsavana[1] and take a holy dip in the Tīrtha Manojava. By visiting the lord Manīṣin he shall attain whatever is mentally thought of

83B-84A After going to the Madhu-vana, he should take a holy bath in the Tīrtha of the goddess and be pure. By worshipping Devas and sages, he attains an excellent Siddhi.

84B-85A The man shall take a holy plunge in the Tīrtha, the confluence of Kauśikī and Dṛṣadvatī. If he observes restraints and restricts his diet, he shall be liberated from all sins.

85B-86. Thereafter, the devotee should go to Vyāsa-sthalī. It was here that the intelligent Vyāsa, overwhelmed by grief at the bereavement of his son, decided on casting off his body. He was re-suscitated to life by Devas. By going to that holy spot, the man is rid of his grief.

87. After going to the well of Kinduśū kūpa the devotee should make a gift of a Prastha measure of gingelly seeds. Thereby, he attains the greatest Siddhi. If he dies there, he shall attain liberation.

88. Two Tīrthas are well-known over the Earth Viz. Āhna and Mudita. By taking a holy dip therein and purifying the soul, the devotee shall attain the world of Sun.

89. Thereafter, he should go to the Tīrtha Mṛgamucya on the Gaṅgā. By bowing down and worshipping Mahādeva, the devotee shall attain the benefit of a horse-sacrifice.

90. Thereafter, he should go to Koṭitīrtha. By taking a holy dip, by visiting Śivakoṭīśvara and by eulogising him faithfully, he shall attain the benefit of a crore of sacrifices.

91-92. Thereafter, the devotee shall go to Vāmana-kuṇḍa[2] well-known in the three worlds. It was here that Vāmana

1. No jungle now. Its site is now occupied by the village Vārasā to the south of Karnal-Kaithal road. This is different from Vyāsasthali in VV. 85-86 below, where Vyāsa tried to commit suicide (mentioned in Pd. P. I. 26. 90-91).

2. Mentioned in *Mbh. Vana* 83.103, 88.130. Pd. P. I. 26.96. A Vāmana-Kuṇḍa (a pool) is now shown at its site (*Ka'yāṇa* 31. 1 P. 81)

his birth with the desire to destroy Bali's Yajña. By taking the holy bath at Viṣṇupāda therein and by worshipping Vāmana, the devotee shall be freed of all sins. He is honoured in the world of Viṣṇu.

93-94. The hermitage Jyeṣṭhāśrama is destructive of all sins. The devotee should observe fast on the eleventh day in the bright half of the month of Jyeṣṭha. On the next day, he should perform ablution therein in accordance with the injunctions. Thereby, he attains the greatest excellence among men. O gentle lady, the Śrāddha performed there gives great satisfaction to the Pitṛs.

95. There itself is the Koṭitīrtha well known in the three worlds. By taking a holy dip in that Tīrtha he shall obtain the benefit of a crore of sacrifices.

96. By duly worshipping Maheśvara, the lord of the Devas, named Koṭīśvara, the devotee shall attain chieftancy of the Gaṇas.

97A. By taking a holy dip in the Sūryatīrtha the devotee shall attain the world of the Sun.

97B-98A. Going to the Tīrtha called Kulottāraṇaka and taking a holy dip therein, the devotee uplifts his family. He then stays in heaven till the end of Kalpa.

98B-99A. By taking a holy dip in the Deep pool of the Wind-God and by visiting lord Maheśvara, the devotee shall be liberated from all sins and attain Śiva's region.

99B. By taking a holy dip in the Hanumattīrtha the man shall attain liberation.

100. By taking a holy dip in the Tīrtha of the saintly king Śālahotra the devotee shall be devoid of sins. By taking the holy dip in the Tīrtha of the Sarasvatī named Śrīkumbha the man shall attain the benefit of Yajña.

101. By taking the holy dip in the Naimiṣakuṇḍa the devotee attains the merit of ablution in the Naimiṣa. By taking a holy bath in the Vedavatī tīrtha a woman shall attain the Status of Satī (Pārvatī).

102. By taking a holy dip in the Brahma Tīrtha a man obtains Brāhmaṇa-hood. This is the greatest spot of Brahmā. By going there none comes to grief.

103. By taking a holy dip in Somatīrtha, a man shall attain heavenly goal. By going to and by having a holy dip in the seven Sārasvata Tīrthas the man shall attain liberation.

104-105. The seven Sarasvatīs viz Suprabhā, Kāñcanākṣī, Viśālā, Manoharī, Sunandā, Suveṇu and Vimalodakā join together there. By taking a holy bath in the Auśanasa Tīrtha, the devotee shall be freed from all sins.

106. By taking a holy dip in the Kapālamocana even a Brāhmaṇa-slayer becomes pure. A man who takes a holy dip in the Vaiśvāmitra Tīrtha shall attain Brāhmaṇa-hood.

107. By taking the holy dip in the Pṛthūdaka[1] one is liberated from worldly bondage. By taking a holy dip in the Avakīrṇa a man attains the benefit of celibacy.

108. One who goes to Madhusrāva and takes a holy bath shall be liberated from sins. By taking the holy dip in the Vasiṣṭhatīrtha, the devotee attains the world of Vasiṣṭha.

109. By taking a holy bath in the confluence of Aruṇā and by observing fast for three days, the devotee attains liberation. No doubt need be entertained in this respect.

110. O auspicious lady, there are four seas there. One who takes a holy dip there attains the benefit of the gift of a thousand cows. He is honoured in the heavenly world.

111. There is another Somatīrtha there. O Mohinī, by taking holy bath in that on the sixth day in the bright half of the month of Caitra, and by performing Śrāddha, one shall uplift the Pitṛs.

112. By taking a holy dip in the Pañcavaṭa and by duly worshipping Śiva who has assumed the Yogic form, the devotee rejoices along with the Devas.

113. One who takes a holy dip in the Kurutīrtha shall attain all Siddhis. The man who takes a plunge in the Svargadvāra, is honoured in the heavenly world.

1. Pṛthūdaka is the famous holy place Pehoa or Pehova, Karnal Dist. It is highly valued in *Mbh. Vana* 83. 142-149 and in *Śalya Parva* 39. 33-34. Also in Pd. P. Svarga, 27.31, 38, 39. VMP. calls it Brahma-yoni-Tīrtha (39. 20, 23).

114A. One who takes bath in the Tīrtha Anaraka is liberated from all sins.

114B-115A. O gentle lady, thereafter, the man should go to the excellent forest Kāmyaka Vana.[1] The moment he enters, he is liberated from all accumulations of sins.

115B-116A. After reaching Ādityavana, if he visits (the deity) he will be liberated. By taking holy dip there on a Sunday, the devotee shall attain everything desired.

116B. By taking a holy dip in the Yajñopavītika Tīrtha, the devotee shall attain the benefit of maintaining his own duty.

117. Thereafter, the excellent man shall take a holy dip in the Tīrtha Catuḥpravāha. Thereby, he attains the benefit of all Tīrthas and rejoices in heaven like a Deva.

118. One who takes bath in the Tīrtha Vihāra shall attain all happiness. By taking a holy dip in the Durgā Tīrtha a man never faces misfortunes.

119. Thereafter, the devotee should take bath in the well Sarasvatī also known as Pitṛ-Tīrtha, and perform the Tarpaṇa rite to the Devas and others; thereby he shall attain excellent salvation.

120. By taking a holy dip in the Prācī Sarasvatī[2] (Eastern Sarasvatī) and by performing the Śrāddha rites in accordance with the injunctions, the devotee shall attain even inaccessible desires. At the time of death, he shall attain heavenly goal.

121-22A. By taking a holy dip in the Śukra Tīrtha and offering Śrāddha a man shall uplift the Pitṛs. He should observe fast on the eighth or the fourteenth day particularly in the dark half of the month of Caitra and take bath in the Brahma Tīrtha. Undoubtedly he will attain liberation.

1. The site of the forest is occupied by the village Kamodhā. It is three miles from Jyotisaras to the south of the Pehova road.

2. It is so called as the Sarasvati turned to the east at this place. Today there is only a tank of that name where pilgrims performed *Tarpaṇa* to the ancestors. The surrounding relics testify to its glorious past.

122B-123. Thereafter, he shall take bath in the Sthāṇu-Tīrtha and visit the Sthāṇuvṛṣa. The man thereby is liberated from terrible sins. So says Pitāmaha. By visiting the Sthāṇuliṅga the pilgrimage becomes complete.

124. O goddess, the pilgrimage of the holy centre Kurukṣetra is thus complete. Truth and nothing but the truth is uttered by me. There has never been and there never will be a Tīrtha like Kurukṣetra.

125A. By undertaking twelve such pilgrimages the devotee is not born again.

125B-126A. Holy rites and laudable public works like digging tanks, wells, penances, Homas, duly given charitable gifts etc. at that place, everything shall be everlasting. They who know the Vedas know this.

126B-127. One who takes a holy dip on the inaugural days of Manvantaras and Yugas, during lunar and solar eclipses during the transits of the sun, on Mahāpāta period and on other holy occasions shall attain infinite benefits.

128. It is for the purification of sins of noble souls, originating from the Kali age that the pleasant Tīrtha of Kuruksetra has been created by Brahmā.

129. He too who glorifies this sacred story that destroys sins, or the man who devoutly listens to this, is liberated from sins

130. In every birth, the man shall always attain whatever he gives away at Kurukṣetra at the time of solar eclipse.

131. Now, of what avail is much talk ? O daughter of Brahmā, listen to this decision. If one wishes for deliverance from worldly bondage, one shall of necessity resort to Kurukṣetra.

132. This is the greatest merit. This is the greatest penance. This alone is the greatest perfect knowledge if one goes to the Sthāṇutīrtha.

133. There is no other Tīrtha on the Earth as splendid as Kurukṣetra. Whether one adheres to the Ācāras or not (i.e. discipline of castes and stages of life) one attains liberation there.

134-135. O sinless lady, what I have been asked, I have told you entirely, about the greatness of Kurukṣetra that destroys sins. It is meritorious. It bestows salvation. What else do you wish to hear ?

CHAPTER SIXTYSIX

Glory of Gaṅgādvāra
(Or Haridvāra)

Mohini submitted :

1. O most excellent one among the Brāhmaṇas, the greatness of Kuruksetra* that is exceedingly destructive of sins, and which bestows Siddhis on men, has been heard from you.

2. O preceptor, blessed are you. Kindly recount to me the meritorious Tīrtha well known as Gaṅgādvāra.[1] There is great desire in my heart to hear about it.

Vasu narrated :

3. Listen, O gentle lady, I shall describe to you the greatness of Gaṅgādvāra that destroys sins. It is holy and auspicious to those who listen and read.

4. It is at this place that the holy Gaṅgā named Alakanandā reaches the Earth piercing through the mountains in thousand places and following the chariot of Bhagīratha.

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*The editor of the Sk. Text remarks :

Thus the greatness of Kurukṣetra is completely recounted. Now the greatness of Gaṅgādvāra is begun.

1. The same as Hari (ra) dvāra (U. P.). Although the name Haridvāra implying Gaṅgādvāra is used in the Sk. P. IV and the Pd. P., Gaṅgādvāra was more popular in ancient times as Hiuen Tsang and Al Biruni called it Gaṅgādvāra ('the Gate of the Gaṅgā' as the Chinese traveller put it). It is one of the seven holiest cities in India. It is also called Māyā or Māyāpurī.

5. It is here that Dakṣa,[1] the Prajāpati, formerly worshipped Yajñeśa (Lord of Yajñas). That holy place bestows merits on men and destroys sins.

6. In this Yajña, Devas with their leaders like Indra and others had been invoked. With a desire to partake of their shares in the Yajña, they came here accompanied by their attendants.

7. O auspicious lady, the divine sages, pure Brahmanical sages and saintly kings together with their disciples and their disciples' disciples had come there.

8-9A. All of them had been invited by that intelligent son of Brahmā. The Gandharvas, Apsaras, Yakṣas, Siddhas, Vidyādharas and serpents—all came to the place of Yajña, except Śiva, the Pināka-bearing deity.

9B-10. As the invitees were going in their aerial chariots along with their wives, they were extolling the festivities in the Yajña of Dakṣa delightedly. The beautiful lady Satī heard (their descriptions) and became eager (to see it for herself). She therefore requested Mahādeva for permission to go.

11-12. On hearing it, the Lord said : "It is not conducive to welfare to go there". In view of the gravity of the inevitable future, she disregarded the lord and went there to participate in the celebration of the Yajña by her father. When she reached there, she was neither honoured nor welcomed by anyone.

13-15A The beautiful lady laid down her life there and that spot became an excellent holy centre.[2] Those who take their holy bath in that Tīrtha and perform the rite of Tarpaṇa to the Devas and Pitṛs, shall be favourites of the goddess. They will be able to enjoy worldly pleasures as well as salvation. Those who cast off their lives there by means of fasts etc. attain Śiva himself. They are not reborn in Saṁsāra.

15B-16. On hearing about the death of his beloved from Nārada, lord Nīlalohita (Śiva) created Vīrabhadra.

1. It is at a distance of about half a mile or so from modern Haridvāra that we are shown the place of Dakṣa's famous sacrifice. The story of destruction of Dakṣa's sacrifice is given in *Mbh. Śānti* 283. 32-37 and in other Purāṇas like the Bh. P.

2. This is called Satī-Kuṇḍa.

Accompanied by all the Pramathas, he destroyed that Yajña completely.

17. By the subsequent prayer of Brahmā God Śiva was immediately propitiated. He reorganized the Yajña. The disorganized Yajña was brought back to normalcy.

18. Thereafter, that Tīrtha has become unequalled and destructive of all sins. By performing ablution into it, the moon-god became free from the grip of consumptive diseases.

19. No doubt need be entertained in this respect, O daughter of Brahmā. He who duly takes bath in that Tīrtha attains every desire he cherishes.

20. Hari Tīrtha is that holy centre where the immutable lord Viṣṇu, the lord of Yajñas, was eulogised by Dakṣa and Devas.

21. The man who duly takes a holy bath there at Haripāda, O chaste lady, shall be a beloved favourite of Viṣṇu and the receptacle of worldly pleasures and salvation.

22. To the east of this is the well known holy centre Trigaṅgā. The Tripathagā (Gaṅgā flowing along the three paths) is directly seen there by the people.

23. By taking a holy bath therein and by performing the rite of Tarpaṇa to the Devas, sages, Pitṛs and human beings, the man endowed with perfect faith rejoices in heaven like a god.

24. O chaste lady, he who falls into the current and abandons his life, shall go to the abode of Viṣṇu. He is duly honoured by Devas.

25. Thereafter, the devotee should go to the Tīrtha, Kanakhala[1] in the southern direction. In observing fast for three nights and by taking a holy dip in the Tīrtha, one is liberated from all sins.

26. O gentle lady, he who gives a cow there to a Brāhmaṇa who has mastered the Vedas never sees Vaitaraṇī nor Yama.

1. Kanakhala is at a distance of about three miles from Here ki Paiḍī.

27A. Anything given or offered into the sacred fire, or Japa, or penance performed here attains everlasting benefit.

27B-28. The Jahnu Tīrtha is also here where formerly that river was drunk up by the royal sage Jahnu after making a mouthful of her. When he was propitiated, the river was released by him and it came out of his ear.

29-30A. O blessed lady, the man who takes his holy dip there, who observes fast, who is equipped with faith and who duly propitiates a Brāhmaṇa who has mastered the Vedas, by feeding him with excellent cooked rice, shall stay in the heaven for the duration of a Kalpa.

30B-31. O lady of fine waist-line, thereafter, the devotee should go to the Koṭitīrtha which is in the western direction. By visiting Koṭīśa the merit acquired is a crore of times more. By observing fast for a night there, the devotee shall attain the benefit of Puṇḍarīka sacrifice.

32. Similarly, in the northern quarter, there is the great Tīrtha well known as Saptagaṅgā.[1] O gentle lady, it is destructive of all sins.

33-34A. O highly intelligent lady, the holy hermitages of the seven sages are there. By taking a holy bath severally in those Tīrthas and by performing the rite of Tarpaṇa to the gods and to the Pitṛs, the man obtains the eternal world of sages.

34B-35. When the Divine river Gaṅgā was being brought by king Bhagīratha, the river, thanks to her love and fondness for them (seven sages), flowed in seven currents. Therefore, the Tīrtha became famous as Saptagaṅgā.

36. The devotee then goes to the Āvarta and performs Tarpaṇa rite to all, beginning with the Devas, after the holy bath. Thereby, he rejoices in the abode of Devendra for the period of a Yuga.

37. Thereafter, O gentle lady, the devotee should go to the excellent Kapilahrada. By giving a cow as gift to an excel-

1. It is called Sapta-dhārā now. It is at a distance of a mile or so from Bhima-Goḍā.

lent Brāhmaṇa he shall attain the benefit of giving a thousand cows.

38. The extremely sacred Tīrtha of Nāgarāja, (king of serpents, is here itself. He who performs the rite of ablution here, shall derive protection from serpents.

39. Thereafter, the devotee should go to Lalitaka and the excellent Tīrtha of Śantanu. By taking the holy bath therein and performing the rite of Tarpaṇa in accordance with injunctions the gods and others, the devotee attains salvation.

40. It was here that Gaṅgā who had come in a human form was attained by Śantanu. After giving birth to the Vasus year by year, it was here that she threw them in and finally cast off her body.

41-42A. Where the body was cast off, medicinal trees grew up. The man who takes bath there and eats parts of the trees never sees any misfortune by the grace of goddess Gaṅgā.

42B. Thereafter, the devotee shall go to the Tīrtha Bhīmasthala.[1] He who takes a holy bath there is a meritorious man.

43. After enjoying pleasures here, the devotee shall attain heavenly status after death.

O gentle lady, these holy centres have been narrated to you very briefly.

44-45A. O blessed lady, there are thousands of other Tīrthas there. He who takes a holy dip in this sacred holy centre when Jupiter is in Aquaries and the sun is in Aries, shall be a master of speech and shall be like the Sun god himself in refulgence.

45B-46. After having completed the pilgrimage of Prayāga and other holy centres full of sacred waters, the pilgrim should assiduously take a holy bath in the following Tīrthas Viz : Vāruṇa, Yoga, Mahāvāruṇa and Mahāmahāvāruṇa. He shall take holy bath in accordance with injunctions.

47-48. By worshipping the Brāhmaṇas devotedly, he shall attain the region of Brahmā. If he makes any charitable

1. Probably the same as Bhima-goḍā, a holy centre on the way from Haridvāra to Rishikesh (*Kalyāṇa* 31. 1. P. 64).

gift during the transit of the Sun, or on the new-moon day, or when the Vyatīpāta period of time occurs, or on the anniversary day of the beginning of Yugas, or during other sacred days, it shall have a crore times more benefit. It is the truth that has been declared by me.

49. He who remembers Gaṅgādvāra even when he is far away, attains good goal like the person who remembers Hari in the end.

50. That deity whom pure man worships at Haridvāra shall become delighted and fulfil his desires.

51. The place where Gaṅgā entered the Earth is itself a place of penance, it is a place of Japa and the place of Homa.

52. The man who observes restraints and after taking a holy dip, repeats the thousand epithets of the Gaṅgā three times per day, shall attain a line of progeny that gets never extinct.

53. O blessed lady, he who devoutly listens to the Purāṇa at Gaṅgādvāra with due observance of restraints, attains the unchanging region (i.e. the permanent abode of the Supreme Lord).

54. The excellent man who listens to or reads the greatness of Haridvāra with great devotion shall acquire the benefit of the holy bath there.

55-56. O gentle lady, there is no cause of fear from serpents, thieves, fires, evil planets or tyrannous kings. All the riches increase, thanks to the grace of lord Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER SIXTYSEVEN*

*The Greatness of Badarikāśrama***

Mohini said :

1. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, the greatness of Gaṅgādvāra has been recounted. Now narrate the greatness of Badarī that is destructive of sins.

Vasu said :

2. Listen, O gentle lady, I shall describe in detail to you the greatness of Badarī. On hearing this, a creature (the living soul) is liberated from the bondage of birth and saṁsāra.

3. The holy centre of Hari named Badarī is destructive of all sins. It bestows liberation on those men who are afraid of worldly existence and it dispels the defects of Kali Yuga.

4-5. There, lord Nārāyaṇa and the holy sage Nara who were born of Mūrti and Dharma, went to Gandhamādana mountain where there is a Badarī tree endowed with many fruits of sweet fragrance.

O blessed lady, on that spot, they have been engaged in penance ever since the beginning of Kalpa.

6. They are surrounded by Nārada and other excellent sages staying in the village of Kalāpa[1] and also by the groups of Siddhas. They stationed themselves there for the sustenance of the world.

7. There is a well known holy centre named Agnitīrtha[2] (Hot water spring). It yields all Siddhis. Even those who are defiled by great sins become purified by taking holy dip therein.

8. Just as the discoloured gold becomes pure when heated in the fire, so also the embodied soul becomes liberated from sins by plunging into the Agnitīrtha.

*The editor of the text of N. P. introduces this chapter with the remark : Henceforth the greatness of Badari is begun.

**Mod. Badrinath in Garhwal, (Uttar Pradesh)

1. Purāṇas like Bh. P. X. 87.7 state that there was a village called Kalāpa near Badarikāśrama, but now there is no such village. The big plain behind Mucakunda's cave is regarded by some as the site of Kalāpa grāma (*Kalyāṇa* 31.1 P. 60); about other locations vide De, p. 84.

2. This is the hot-water spring near Badrīnāth temple where people take bath. It is below the local Kedāranātha shrine.

9. By taking a holy dip in the Agnitīrtha a man obtains that benefit which is obtained from thousands of Cāndrāyaṇas and crores of Kṛcchras.

10. There are five rocky slabs.[1] O daughter of Brahmā, Agnitīrtha is situated in their midst. By its mere sight, it dispels sins.

11. That rocky slab is called Nāradī śilā where the holy sage Nārada performed a terrible penance. By its very sight, it yields liberation.

12-14A. O lady of beautiful eyes, there is the perpetual presence of Hari, there. The Nāradakuṇḍa (holy pool of Nārada) is also there. The man who takes a holy bath there becomes pure. He obtains whatever he desires, such as worldly pleasures, salvation and devotion to Hari. Whatever a man performs here with devotion such as holy bath, charitable gift, worship of Devas, Homa, Japa or other rites are imperishable.

14B-15. There is another splendid rocky slab in that holy centre. It is called Vainateyaśilā.

It was here that a very severe penance was performed y Garuḍa of noble soul, for thirty thousand years with the desire for seeing Hari.

16. O auspicious lady, the delighted lord granted him the boon and said, "O dear one, be unconquerable to the host of Daityas, and a terror unto the serpents.

17-18A. Become my vehicle. I am delighted with you. This rocky slab where the penance has been performed by you will become famous over the Earth by your name. By its mere sight it shall be the bestower of merit on men.

18B-19A. In this most important Tīrtha on Gaṅgā, with a desire to attain my love (you have performed penance). O blessed one, may it manifest itself as the granter of merits to those who take their holy dip here.

1. The five rocky-slabs are below the hot-water-spring called Agni *Tīrtha*. The order of slabs to-day is (1) Garuḍa or Vainateya (2) Nārada, (3) Mārkaṇḍeya, (4) Narasiṁha and (5) Vārāhī (*Kalyāṇa* 30. 1. p. 59). The order in the NP is as follows : (1) Nārada, (2) Vainateya or Garuḍa 3) Vārāhī, (4) Narasiṁha (5) Nara:Nārāyaṇa Śilā on the bank of the hot-spring (Vahni Kuṇḍa).

19b-20. He who takes a holy bath in the Pañcagaṅgā and performs the rites of Tarpaṇa to the Devas and others, does not return from the eternal world of Brahmā."

After granting this boon, Viṣṇu vanished then.

21-22A. At the behest of Viṣṇu, Garuḍa attained the state of being the vehicle of Viṣṇu. Thereafter, that holy centre has become destructive of sins.

22B. It is the bestower of merits on being remembered. It yields the goal of Vainateya. There is another auspicious slab of a rock. It is known as Vārāhī (Śilā).

23. It was here that the lord (in the form of a divine Boar) lifted up the Earth after striking down Hiraṇyākṣa and occupied this position in the form of a rocky slab. He is the destroyer of sins.

24. The man who goes there, plunges into the pure waters of Gaṅgā and worships that rocky slab with devotion does not attain misfortunes or hell.

25. There is another rocky slab called Narasiṁha śilā. The lord of Devas killed Hiraṇyakaśipu and rested there on the rock.

26. Later on, his anger was assuaged by the celestial sages. He was requested to stay perpetually there at Viśālā (i.e. Badarikāśrama).

27. The four-armed deity accordingly assumed the rocky form. Engaged in aquatic sports, he permanently stays in the middle of water.

28. The man who takes a holy bath there and worships the rocky slab, attains the abode of Viṣṇu from which rarely does any one return to Saṁsāra.

29. O gentle lady, know the fifth rocky slab situated on the banks of Vahnikūpa (i.e. the hot water spring thereof). It is called Naranārāyaṇa Śilā. I shall explain about it now, listen.

30. In the age called Kṛtayuga, Hari in the form of Naranārāyaṇa stayed there directly visible to all as the bestower of worldly pleasures and liberation.

31. O auspicious lady, in the age named Tretāyuga, he is seen by the sages, Devas and Yogins and not by others. He

himself adopts the Yogic posture and remains as the sustainer of worlds.

32. When Dvāpara Age arrives he is seen by the path of knowledge and not by any other means. In the Tiṣya (i.e. Kali age) he becomes (completely) invisible.

33. Therefore, Brahmā and other Devas, sages and ascetics, eulogised lord Hari with various kinds of praise and propitiated him.

34. Thereupon, an incorporeal voice (from heaven) addressed Brahmā and others : "I shall not be visible in the Kali age that is devoid of virtue and piety.

35. O leading Devas, if you have faith in viewing the Maṇḍapa (ceremonial hall) take up my image of rock situated in the Nārada Kuṇḍa".

36-37. On hearing those words, Brahmā and others became delighted at heart. They took out that divine rock image situated in the Nāradakuṇḍa and installed it. After worshipping it, they went to their respective abodes. It is in the month of Vaiśākha that Devas go back to their abodes.

38-39. They come back again in the month of Kārttika and perform the rite of worship. At the beginning of Vaiśākha, due to the melting away of snow, the meritorious human beings devoid of sinful actions are able to see the deity. The deity is to be worshipped for six months by Devas and for six months by human beings.

40-41A. It is under these conditions that the image manifested itself from that time onwards. He who devoutly worships the image of Viṣṇu and partakes of Naivedya, certainly attains liberation.

41B-42. These five holy rocky slabs are thus situated in Viśālā (Badarikā). The Naivedya offered to Hari in these places is inaccessible even to Devas. What then to the human beings? If it is partaken of, it is a means to salvation.

43. Even if the boiled rice offered as Naivedya to Viṣṇu at Badarī is partaken of, it shall purify sins in the body like the blazing fire that purifies the dross in gold.

44. Thus this is the holy spot of Kapālamocana[1] which dispels sins. In its midst too, there are five rocky slabs that dispel sins.

45. O Mohinī, listen to another great holy pool here itself. By taking a holy dip here with devotion, the man becomes master of the Vedas.

46. The Asura named Hayaśiras, a terror to Devas and others, snatched away Vedas coming out of the mouth of god Brahmā.

47. Thereupon, prayed to by Brahmā, Viṣṇu manifested himself in the form of a divine Fish. The lord killed the demon and handed over the Vedas to Brahmā.

48. That Tīrtha is highly meritorious. It illuminates all lores. O blessed lady, it is called Taimiṅgila Tīrtha. By its mere vision it is destructive of sins.

49-50. Once again, the unchanging lord Viṣṇu in the form of the horse-necked being, killed the arrogant Asuras, Madhu and Kaiṭabha who stole the Vedas from god Brahmā. He handed the Vedas back to Brahmā. O daughter of Brahmā that Tīrtha dispels sins by a mere holy dip.

51. In both Tīrthas, Matsya (i.e. Taimiṅgalla)[2] as well as Hayagrīva, the Vedas exist in the liquid form of water perpetually. O gentle lady, that water is destructive of sins.

52. O gentle lady, there is a famous holy centre Indrapāda in the south-east corner. By taking a holy dip therein, a man shall attain the region of Indra (or Indra-hood).

53. There is another charming Tīrtha there named Mānasodbhedaka[3] (resolver of the mind.) It splits the knots in the hearts; it dispels all doubts.

1. It is at a distance of about one and a half furlong from the Agni-Tīrtha on the bank of the Alakanandā. When god Śiva cut off the fifth head of god Brahmā, it stuck to his hand, Śiva performed pilgrimage to all places but was rid of that sticking head at this Tīrtha. Hence it is called Brahma-Kapāla. Pilgrims offer *Piṇḍa* here to their ancestors.

2. According to *Kalyāṇa* 31. 1 P. 61, it is high up on the mountain behind the Badrīnātha temple at a higher altitude than Urvaśī-Kuṇḍa.

3. At Keśava-Prayāga, near the stone bridge or Bhīmaśilā on the Alakanandā, two cascades form this Tīrtha. Its water is famous in Garhwal for its health-restorative efficacy.

(*Kalyāṇa* 31. 1. P. 60)

54-55. It despels all sins also. Hence, it is called Mānasodbhedaka.

O fair-faced lady, there is another Tīrtha there called Kāmākāma. It bestows the desired objects on those who have a desire for it and confers salvation on those who have no desires.

O gentle lady, to the west of it is the Tīrtha called Vasudhārā.[1]

56-57. By taking a holy bath therein with devotion, a man obtains the desired benefit (Defective Text). The meritorious persons see the deity, stationed in the middle of waters On seeing it, the creature does not have the compulsion to stay in the womb (i.e. is not reborn).

Thereafter, in the south-western direction five currents flow down.

58. Their names are Prabhāsa, Puṣkara, Gayā, Naimiśāraṇya and Kurukṣetra. By taking a holy dip in every one of them separately, the man obtains the benefit of respective Tīrtha.

59-60A. There is another pure Tīrtha, the second name of which is Somakuṇḍa, By performing severe penance here, Soma (the moon god) became the over-lord of planets and luminaries that move about in the firmament). O gentle lady, by taking a holy bath, a man becomes free from defects and sins.

60B-61a. There is another Tīrtha there called Dvādaśāditya, (the sacred pool of the twelve sun-gods). It is excessively destructive of sins. By taking a holy dip in it, a man becomes comparable to the sun by means of his refulgence.

61B-62A. There is another Tīrtha there called Catuḥsrotas . A man who plunges into it attains whatever he wishes from among the Puruṣārthas viz. virtue, wealth love and liberation.

1. This is a beautiful waterfall at a distance of five miles from Badarīnātha shrine.

62B-63. There is another charming Tīrtha there named Saptapada. By the very sight of this Tīrtha, even great sins definitely perish. O chaste lady, what then if he takes a holy bath therein ?

64. In the sacred pools called Trilokakuṇḍas, Brahmā. Viṣṇu and Maheśvara are stationed. By dying therein the man attains the region called Satya-loka.

65-66A. O auspicious lady, there is another Tīrtha in the residence of Naranārāyaṇa. Its name is Urvaśīkuṇḍa.[1] One who takes bath here becomes endowed with handsome features. He shall be a great favourite of Nārāyaṇa. He will captivate the universe.

66B. Then to the south of it there is the great Tīrtha called Astra.

67-68. It was here that Nara and Nārāyaṇa deposited their weapons and engaged themselves in the penance. (It is true) O highly blessed lady, since the divine weapons (such as) the conch, discus etc are seen in embodied form by meritorious persons. A man who takes a holy bath there with devotion shall never be afraid of an enemy.

69. There is the holy centre called Merutīrtha there. By visiting the bowbearing deity after the holy dip, O auspicious lady, the devotee realises all desires.

70-71A. There is another Tīrtha named after the guardians of quarters. It is an excellent holy centre. It is here that the guardians of quarters performed penance. O gentle lady, the man who performs ablution into the Tīrtha attains the benefit of plunging into all Tīrthas.

71B-72A. Since it was by striking with his staff that the Tīrtha was created by Hari, it has come to be called Daṇḍapuṣkariṇī. It yields happiness to the protectors of the worlds (i.e. the guardians of quarters.)

72B-74A. That Tīrtha where the Bhāgīrathī is joined by Alakanandā is the most excellent of all holy spots in the sacred

1. Just behind the Badarīnātha shrine, high up on the hill there is the Urvaśi Kuṇḍa. Here Nārāyaṇa is said to have created Urvaśi from his lap and discomfited Indra's band of tempters.

Badarikāśrama. By takihg a holy bath and devoutly performing the Tarpaṇa rites to the Pitṛs and Devas and by worshipping them with devotion, the devotee attains the abod of Viṣṇu. He is bowed to by all Devas.

74B-75. O splendid-faced lady, there is Dharmakṣetra(the sacred place called Dharma) to the south of the confluence. I consider that holy centre as the most sacred. It is the most excellent of all Tīrthas. O gentle lady, by taking a holy bath there, the man becomes one who has reached the vicinity of that which should be accomplished (viz Mokṣa).

76. The Tīrtha called Urvaśīsaṅgama, is the dispeller of all sins of man. There is another holy centre called Karmoddhāra. It is the sole means to attain Hari's devotion.

77. The Tīrtha called Brahmāvarta is the sole cause of attaining the world of Brahmā. These Tīrthas based on the Gaṅgā have been recounted to you.

78-79A. Even god Brahmā is not competent to describe entirely the Tīrthas stationed there. He who listens to this and he who narrates this with concentration shall be liberated from all sins. He shall attain the world of Viṣṇu.

79B-80A. The man who stays here for a month and observes holy rites with devotion, will visualize lord Hari, Nara and Nārāyaṇa directly.

80B. Premature death, mental anguish, physical ailments and fear of serpents shall not befall the abode, O gentle lady, where the greatness of Badarikāśrama has been written and preserved. Thanks to Hari's favour, happiness always abides there. The riches flourish, thanks to the favour of Viṣṇu.

CHAPTER SIXTYEIGHT

*The Legend of Kāmodā**

Mohinī said :

1. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, recount to me the greatness of Kāmodā.[1] On hearing it directly from your mouth, I shall feel contented and delighted.

Vasu said :

2. O gentle lady, listen, I shall narrate to you the auspicious details of Kāmodā. O hearing it, one is released from all sins. There is no doubt about it.

3. O gentle lady, the city Kāmodā is situated on the banks of Gaṅgā. It is here that Kāmodā, the beloved of Hari, resides along with Devas.

4. O gentle lady, it was when the milk-ocean was churned that Kāmodā was born among the four jewels of Virgins.

5. The virgin Raṃā was the first and the second was Vāruṇī. The girl Kāmodā was the third; the fourth was Varā.

*The printed Text of the N. P. has this following introductory remark.

Thus the greatness of Badarikāśrama has been recounted. Henceforth, the greatness of Kāmodā is being recounted.

1. Kāmodā is the name of a beautiful virgin churned out of the Milk-ocean, who married Viṣṇu. She stays in a 'city' on an unscalable mountain covered with snow. The city is also called Kāmodā and is said to be on the bank of Gaṅgā at a distance of ten Yojanas upstream of Gaṅgā from Gaṅgādvāra. When she laughs with delight, her tears of joy are transformed into fragrant yellow lotuses called Kāmoda. It is generally on the 12th day of Caitra when she smiles at the vernal beauty.

These flowers can be collected from the current of Gaṅgā. If god Śiva is worshipped with these, the worshipper gets his desirable objects. If she weeps with sorrow, the tears turn out to be lotuses of bad odour. The Pd. P. Chs. 119-121 tell us the story how demon Vihuṇḍa worshipped god Śiva with such flowers and was killed by Pārvatī. From all accounts, Kāmodā seems to be a mythological town, though the NP advises pilgrims to visit and stay in the city.

There is also a *Tīrtha* there called Kāmodā. That becomes accessible after the melting away of snow.

6. Among them three girls were obtained by the powerful Viṣṇu. O chaste lady, Vāruṇī was taken away by the Asuras at the behest of Lord Viṣṇu.

7. Ever since that time, Lakṣmī has established herself on the chest of Viṣṇu. O auspicious lady, she became the wife of Viṣṇu. She was devoid of any co-wife.

8. Realising the task to be achieved in the future, Devas, at the behest of Viṣṇu, worship goddess Kāmodā in the city called Kāmodā.

9. She stays there perpetually with the desire for the union with Viṣṇu. She has attained the state of his wife in imagination. She is engaged in meditation on Viṣṇu.

10. Lord Visṇu, the great omnipresent deity, approachable through sincerity and devotion by her, stays there perpetually near her.

11. O gentle lady, that deity, the Ātman of the universe, is imperceptible to the Devas, Asuras, sages and human beings. He can be visualised by means of meditation.

12-15. Devas and sages observe the lord only through meditation. O Mohinī, when Kāmodā, the highly blessed lady laughs overwhelmed with delight, tears of delight fall down into Gaṅgā. O goddess of Devas, these tears become lotuses named Kāmodā. They are yellow, fragrant and extremely pleasant. He who comes to acquire them, thanks to his good luck, and worships Śiva with them, shall attain cherished desires. This is the behest of Parameśvara (The Supreme Lord Śiva).

16. Sometimes tears of misery too fall. From those tears lotuses of bad odour crop up.

17. Deluded by the previous sins, if any one worships lord Śaṅkara, the benefactor of the worlds, with those lotus flowers of bad odour he will be oppressed by all miseries.

18-21. Kāmodā is situated ten Yojanas above Gaṅgādvāra. The devotee should perform the Japa of twelve syllabled Mantra for the whole of a year. O daughter of Brahmā, at the end of the year on the twefIh day in the month of Caitra, she will see the splendour of the spring and thanks to her delight, will laugh continuously; then the devotee may get those lotuses and by no means at any other time. The man who is devoted

to Viṣṇu and who takes a holy bath there after contemplating on the city of Kāmodā, shall be a favourite of Viṣṇu. There is no doubt in this that he will be a favourite with the Devas and Pitṛs.

22. O splendid-faced lady, he who stays there for twelve years engaged in the repetition of Japa shall obtain the vision of Kāmodā herself.

23. O lady, by means of holy bath alone, the pure man attains whatever worldly pleasure he may seek.

24. O gentle lady, this is an impassable rugged place. When the snow is melted away on the mountain, this greatest Tīrtha may be accessible, thanks to good luck.

25. Thus the auspicious account of Kāmodā has been wholly recounted. The man who listens to this with devotion is liberated from sins.

CHAPTER SIXTYNINE

The Greatness of Kāmākṣā

Mohini said :

1. The narrative of Kāmodaka that is destructive of sins and conducive to the attainment of merit has been heard by me. O Brāhmaṇa, now I wish to hear the benefit derived from devotion of Kāmākṣā.[1]

1. It is the most important *Devī pīṭha*. It is at a distance of about two miles from Gauhati on a beautiful hill called Nilācala over-hanging the Brahmaputra. The author of the NP. is so overawed with the wide expanse of the Brahmaputra that he thinks it to be a sea and the goddess (Tripura-bhairavī) is described as standing near the sea (*sāgarānūpa-taṭa-gā*) in V. 2 below, *Devī Bhāgavata* VII. 38.15 states that it is the place where the private part of Tripura-bhairavī fell. According to mythological legend, when Śiva became too much grieved at the death of his first wife Satī, he carried her body on his shoulder. So to bring him to normalcy, Viṣṇu cut

Vasu said

2. The greatest goddess Kāmākṣā is stationed in the eastern quarter. She is present on the shores of the marshy place near the Sea. She is the bestower of Siddhi on men in the Kali age.

3. The devotee who goes there and observing restriction in the deity, worships Kāmākṣā and stays a night there seating himself steadfastly, shall then visualize her, O gentle lady.

4. That goddess appears before men in a terrible form. He who is not moved with fear on seeing her, shall attain the desired Siddhi.

5. If on seeing the goddess of Devas, Kāmākṣā of terrific features, the devotee sways from his seats instantaneouly, he shall then certainly become distracted in mind and behaviour.

6. O fair-faced lady, Siddhanātha[1], the son of Pārvatī stays there (engaged) in a severe penance. He is never seen by the people.

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to pieces Satī's body with his discus Sudarśana and as Śiva went on wandering with Sati's body, one after another, her limbs went on falling on the ground. Her private parts fell on the Nīlācala and the *Devī Bhāgavata* calls it the jewel among sacred places where Mahāmāyā ever abides'.

Kāmākṣā is a centre of Tantrism. One wonders why the NP. which devotes a whole section to *tantra*, *mantra* etc. finishes the glory of Kāmākṣā within four (2-5) verses, when he waxes so eloquent on the Tantric worship of Rādhā (and of other deities like Rāma, Narasiṁha, Hanumān and even king Kārttavīrya).

1. This nātha is Matsyendra-nātha, the so-called founder of the Nātha Sampradāya. It is understandable that Jñāneśvara, a 13th Cent. writer from the South, being far away from Assam and writing some four centuries after Matsyendra, should look upon Matsyendra as the human founder of *Nātha-Pantha*. But Tibetan records show that it was sarahapā, the seventh ancestor of Matsyendra, who should be credited if at all with being the founder. Although I have discussed this problem in Marathi under the title "The spiritual lineage of jñāneśvara" in the *Nava-bhārata* (a monthly), I would recommend Rahul Sankrityayana's (Hindi) Introduction to Sarahapāda's *Dohā Kośa* (Bihāra Rāṣṭrabhāṣā Pariṣad, Patna 1957).

It is surprising why the last redactor of NP who comes from east-India (Bengal-Orissa region) should be so ignorant about Matsyendra who was not much removed in time and space from him.

7. During the three Yugas : Kṛta, Tretā and Dvāpara he was directly perceived by every one. In the Kali age, as long as the first quarter of it does not pass off, he shall stay invisible.

8-9. When a quarter of the Kali age has passed off and the surface of the earth has become terrible, he becomes visible and controls the people. O blessed lady, by his powers like Mohana (fascination) Uccāṭana (eradication) etc., he gains control over the people most of whom are Mlecchas[1] (alien out-castes). He will spend the remaininig three quarters of the Kali age by keeping them submissive.

10-11. The devotee should go to Siddhanātha and meditate on him with devotional feelings, for a whole year. Every day he must worship Kāmākṣā. He shall then gain the vision of Siddhanātha in the dream. At the end of the vision he shall have great concentration. He shall achieve Siddhi indicated by it and be a Siddha on the Earth.

12. O auspicious lady, he will be wandering, fulfilling the desires of all the worlds. By means of the boon, he will attract all the articles in the three worlds.

13. He is Matsyanātha (Matsyendra of the Nātha cult) stationed there. O gentle lady, he has mastered the perfect knowledge. He performed a terrible penance, distributing among the people whatever they desired. But he never becomes visible.

14. Formerly, he had roamed all over the worlds without his movement being impeded, for the period of many Yugas. Today the noble-minded personage is completely engaged in penance. O auspicious lady, he is not oppressed by the velocity of Kāla (the force of the stream of time).

15. O highly blessed lady, in the previous birth he had been born as the son of a certain Brāhmaṇa. He was born during the astrologically evil period of a 'Gaṇḍānta' (the tenth astrological Yoga). Hence the moment he was born in the continent named Puṣkara, he was cast into the ocean by his father.

1. The inclusion of Mlecchas in the Nātha cult is implied here, and the initiation of Matsyendra who was abandoned by his father and had become 'casteless', shows the breadth of outlook of the Nātha cult in its early stage.

16. As soon as he was thrown into the sea, thanks to a lucky coincidence, a certain fish swallowed the boy. For many Yugas, he remained there without ageing or dying due to the flux of time.

17. Thereafter, O gentle lady, once urged by his wife, the daughter of the mountain, Maheśvara, the incomprehensible deity accompanied her to the mountain Lokāloka for the instruction in the esoteric principles.

18-19a. On its gentle and beautiful peak illuminated by jewels, the lord stood for half a moment with his mind engrossed in Hari. He enlightened spiritually goddess Umā by means of his Śakti. He drove away the Sattvas (animals, living beings) with three Tālas (clapping of hands).

19b-20. He then told her the Tattva (the real principle) in the form of the meaning of the twelve-syllabled Mantra which had been an esoteric secret. The daughter of the mountain bowed down to Maheśa, the destroyer of Māra. She understood the principle a little and sat there firmly. At that time the fish in the great ocean immediately jumped on to the peak.[1] The Brāhmaṇa boy who was within its belly became a Tattvasiddha (a person who realised the principle) and freed of all bondages.

21. O splendid-faced lady, coming out of the belly of the fish, he made obeisance in front of Śiva and Umā. Though he was aware of the truth Maheśvara asked him the cause of being within the womb of the fish.

22-23. In front of them, he recounted everything in the manner it had happened. On hearing what had happened to him, Umā was pleased. Getting the permission of Maheśa, she made him her son. O fair-limbed lady, placing him on her lap she kissed his face and said :- "O, is this not my Son? He is Matsyanātha, (lord of fish). He has understood the principle. Hence he is Siddhanātha for all.

1. The absurdity of the story—jumping of a fish from the great ocean to the peak of the Lokāloka mountain-top where Śiva was secretly instructing Pārvati in an esoteric lore—is obvious. Jñāneśvara states that it was on a small island in the ocean where Śiva imparted that spiritual knowledge to Pārvati and which was heard by Matsyendra from his fish-mother's belly.

24-25. Let him go over the worlds according to his will. May he accord happiness unto us now."

Ever since that time this son of Ambikā roamed about all the worlds as he pleased. He attained the Siddhapīṭha.[1] He has occupied that seat as one engaged in penance. By mentally meditating on Siddhanātha, a man shall be one who has realised all his desires.

26-27A. He will acquire learning. He will be drawing the multitudes of scholars in the current of his words (eloquent speech). He who hears this story which is the most sacred in the universe. (even though) it might have entered his ears (casually), realises whatever he desires on the Earth and goes to the heaven. His feet are worshipped by the Devas.

27B-C. Thus O lady of beautiful eyes, I have told you about the greatness of Kāmākṣā alongwith the story of Siddhanātha. It is destructive of sins at the outset. O gentle lady, what else shall I recount to you ?

CHAPTER SEVENTY

The Greatness of Prabhāsa

Mohini said :

1. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, recount to me the greatness of Prabhāsa[2] On hearing it I shall be delighted in my mind. May I be blessed thanks to your grace.

1. Kāmākhyā is both Śaktipīṭha and a Siddha-Pīṭha.

2. Prabhāsa, alternately called Somanāthapaṭṭaṇa, Devapaṭṭaṇa, Verāvala, is the holy place of Lord Somanātha, the famous *Jyotirliṅga in* Saurāṣṭra. It is here that Lord Kṛṣṇa gave up his physical body under a Pippala tree. The *Mbh. Vana* 82.58. 58.20 etc. mention the great sanctity of Prabhāsa while the *Śiva Purāṇa, Koṭi-rudra* 15. 56-58 waxes eloquent about the mere sight of Somanātha. The NP., however, is interested in the directory of various Tīrthas in and about Prabhāsa and not so much in

Vasu said :

2. O gentle lady, listen. I shall narrate to you the (glory of the holy centre named Prabhāsa. It yields great merit. It is a Tīrtha that dispels all sins of men. It yields worldly pleasures and salvation.

3-4. O daughter of Brahmā, there are innumerable Tīrthas therein. Someśa,[1] the lord of the universe, the lord of the daughter of the mountain, is present there. By taking a holy bath in the Prabhāsa Tīrtha, and by worshipping Somanātha, a man obtains liberation. What I have stated to you is the truth.

5. The zone of Prabhāsa extends to twelve Yojanas. In its centre is the Pīṭhikā (the pedestal). It is said to extend to five Yojanas.

6. In its middle is the Tīrtha extending to a Gocarma (about a hundred hands. But it excels even mount Kailāsa. Another meritorious and splendid Tīrtha is Arkasthala (the holy spot of the sun).

7-8a. There are thousands of Liṅgas such as Siddheśvara etc. By performing the holy bath there, and the Tarpaṇa rite for Pitṛs and Devas with devotion, and by worshipping the Liṅgas, the devotee attains the same worlds as that of Rudra.

8b-9a. Another Tīrtha, the Agnitīrtha,[2] is situated on the shore of the sea. O gentle lady, by taking the holy dip there, the man shall attain the world of Vahni.

Somanātha. Inscriptional evidence e.g. the Nasik inscription of Uṣavadāta (Bombay, G. XVI p. 669) testifies to the holiness of Prabhāsa. Most of the *sub-tīrthas* mentioned in this chapter are described in detail in the *SkP. Prabhāsa Khaṇḍa.*

1. This is the famous *Jyotir-liṅga* whose shrine faced destruction and re-construction at least five times during the last thousand years. The last re-construction of the shrine took place after Indian independence, probably due to the interest taken by Sardar Patel, the then Home Minister of India.

2. It is strange but watery places are called by the name *Agni-tīrtha* (The sacred 'pool' of the Fire god). Here the sea near the town of Prabhāsa is called *Agni Tīrtha.*

9b-10a. By worshipping lord Kapardīśa (Śiva) after observing fast, the devotee attains Śiva's world after enjoying the desired worldly pleasures.

10b-11a. The devotee shall go to Kedāreśa and worship him in accordance with the injunctions. Thereby, he attains heavenly goal. He goes there by means of an aerial chariot. He is worshipped by Devas.

11b-13. The three deities mentioned before together with the following make fourteen. viz : Bhīmeśa, Bhairveśa, Caṇḍīśa, Bhāskareśvara, Aṅgāreśa, Gurvīśa, Someśa, Bhṛgujeśvara, Śanīśvara, Rāhvīśvara and Śikhīśvara. These deities must be visited in order. By worshipping with devotion these deities severally, the devotee who knows rules of religious procedure attains the same world as Śiva. He becomes competent to chastise as well as to bless others.

14. O daughter of Brahmā, by worshipping five other Liṅgas, Siddheśvara etc., the man attains Siddhi of this world as well as of the other world.

15. By worshipping the fair lady Ajāpālā, Maṅgalā and Laliteśvarī, the man becomes free from sins.

16. By worshipping Lakṣmīśvara, Bāḍaveśa, Arghyeśa and Kāmakeśvara with devotion, a man shall attain lordship of the worlds.

17. By worshipping Gaurīśa, Varuṇeśvara and Uṣeśvara after reaching the penance grove of Gaurī, the man shall attain heavenly goal.

18-19a. By duly worshipping Gaṇeśa, Kumāreśa, Svākakeśa, Kuleśvara, Uttaṅkeśa, Vahnīśa, Gautama and Daityasūdana (the slayer of the Daityas), the man shall never go to hell (or troubles).

19b-20a. The devotee should thereafter go to Cakra Tīrtha, take a holy bath in accordance with the injunctions and worship goddess Gaurī; thereby the man shall obtain the desired benefits.

20b-21a. O fair-faced lady, after reaching the Tīrtha called 'Sannihatyā', the devotee shall take a holy dip and perform the rite of Tarpaṇa to Devas and others. Thereby, he shall attain the benefit accruing from that Sannihatyā Tīrtha.

21b-22a. He who worships the eleven Liṅgas, Bhūteśa and others, attains excellent pleasures and in the end shall attain the region of Rudra.

22b-23a. O gentle lady, by worshipping lord Ādinārāyaṇa, the excellent man shall attain salvation. No doubt need be entertained in this respect.

23b-24a. He who goes near Cakradhara and worships him in accordance with the injunctions shall conquer his enemies and attain worldly pleasures high and low.

24b-25a. The devotee who goes to the Tīrtha Sāmbāditya and takes a holy bath with due observances of restraints shall be free from ailments. The man shall be endowed with wealth and food-grains on the earth.

25b-26a. Then the man should go to the goddess Kaṇṭakaśodhinī who slew Mahisa. By worshipping her, the man becomes fearless.

26b-27a. By worshipping Kapālīśa and Koṭīśa, the excellent man shall become extremely fortunate. Thus the middle pilgrimage shall be completed.

27b-28a. O queen of men, by going to the Tīrtha Bālabrahmā thereafter, the man becomes a master of worldly pleasures and salvation. He will be honoured and worshipped by all Devas.

28b-29a. By worshipping Narakeśa, Saṁvarteśa, Nidhīśvara, one shall be having worldly pleasures and liberation.

29b. By resorting to Gaṅgāgaṇapati and worshipping him in accordance with the injunctions, the devotee derives desired benefits in this world as well as in the other world.

30-31a. Thereafter, the man should go to the river Jāmbavatī. By taking the holy dip with devotion and concentration and by worshipping the deity, the man shall have his objects accomplished.

31b-32a. Thereafter, he shall take a holy dip in the well Pāṇḍukūpa and worship Pāṇḍaveśvara. That man goes to heaven and sports about in Nandana and other parks.

32b-33a. By worshipping the three Liṅgas, Śatamedha, Lakṣamedha and Koṭimedha in the proper order, the devotee rejoices in the heaven like a Deva.

33b-34a. By visiting Durvāsādityaka and by worshipping him in accordance with the injunctions, the devotee shall undoubtedly attain the benefit of horse-sacrifice.

34b-35a. By resorting to Yādavasthalī[1] and by worshipping Varṣeśa, the man attains his coveted Siddhi. He is greeted and honoured by the king of Devas.

35b-36. After taking a holy dip in the confluence of the Hiraṇyā, the devotee shall make a gift of a golden chariot to a Brāhmaṇa looking upon him as Śiva. He who does so with devotion shall obtain everlasting worlds. By worshipping Nagarārka thereafter, this devotee shall attain the world of the sun.

37. By visiting and duly worshipping Bala, Kṛṣṇa and Subhadrā near Nagarāditya, one shall attain the sāyujya (identity) with Kṛṣṇa.

38. Thereafter, the devotee shall go to Kumārikā Tīrtha and worship the deity in accordance with the injunctions. There is no doubt about this that he attains cherished desires and conquers even Indra.

39a. By worshipping Kṣetrapāla thereafter, he shall attain all desired benefits.

39b-40a. By worshipping Brahmeśvara installed on the banks of Sarasvatī[2] the devotee shall be freed from all sins. He is honoured in the world of Brahmā.

40b-41a. He should then go to the river Piṅgalā and take a holy dip there. By performing Śrāddha, the man is not born here again. By worshipping Saṅgameśa, the man wards off misfortune or hell.

1. This is traditionally regarded as the site of the last mutually-annihilating fight among Yādavas. It is on the bank of the Hiraṇyā river (*Kalyāṇa* 31. I. P. 419).

2. This is different from the Vedic Sarasvatī of Kurukṣetra. This is also called Prabhāsa Sarasvati, *Pratyak* (west-ward flowing) Sarasvatī. Near Prabhāsa, the small rivers, the Kapilā, Sarasvatī and Hiraṇyā join each other near the sea and fall into. It is also called 'Triveṇī' confluence, though actually the Kapilā joins the Sarasvatī which flows into the Hiraṇyā which ultimately falls into the sea.

41b-42. By worshipping Śaṅkarāditya, and Ghaṇṭeśa, the great lord, a man shall attain all cherished desires. There is no doubt about this.

43. The devotee should then go to the Ṛṣi Tīrtha and take a holy bath with full control of the mind. By worshipping the sages there, he shall attain the benefits of all the Tīrthas.

44. By worshipping Nandāditya thereafter, he is liberated from all ailments. By resorting to Tritakūpa and by taking the holy dip therein, he goes to the heaven.

45. O Mohinī, by taking a holy dip in 'Śaśopāna' the man sees Devas and attains all desired benefits. Truth : It is the truth that has been stated by me.

46-47. By visiting Parṇāditya, the man becomes free from ailments and enjoys worldly pleasures. By resorting to Nyaṅkumatī, by taking the holy dip there in accordance with the injunctions and by worshipping Siddheśvara, the devotee shall attain Aṇimā (minuteness) and other Siddhis. By visiting Varāhasvāmin, one is liberated from the ocean of mundane existence.

48. By worshipping Chāyāliṅga one is liberated from all sins. By visiting Gulpha and worshipping him one shall attain the benefit of observance of the Cāndrāyaṇa vow.

49. O chaste lady, by worshipping goddess Kanakanandā, the devotee attains all cherished desires. On death he attains heavenly goal.

50-51a. By worshipping Kuntīśvara, one is liberated from all sins. The man who takes a plunge in the Gaṅgā and worships Gaṅgeśvara is liberated from the three types of sins.

51b-52a. He who takes a holy dip in Camasodbhedaka and offers balls of rice, obtains a merit a crore of times more than at Gayā. There is no doubt about this.

52b-53. Thereafter, O daughter of Brahmā, the devotee should go to the excellent Vidurāśrama and worship Triga, the lord of the three worlds. Thereby, he shall be happy. By worshipping Maṅkaṇeśvara, the man attains good goal (i.e. heaven).

54-55. By worshipping Traipura and Triliṅga, one is liberated from sins. Thereafter, the man shall resort to Ṣaṇḍa-

tīrtha, take a holy dip there and make a gift of gold. Thereafter, he shall be purified of all sins. He shall attain the region of Śiva. By taking a holy dip in Sūryaprācī, the man shall be devoid of sins and enjoy worldly pleasures.

56-57. By taking a holy dip in the Tīrtha, Trilocana, the man attains Rudraloka. By worshipping Umānātha in the Devikā river the excellent man attains desired benefits. On death he shall attain heavenly benefit. By worshipping Bhūdvāra the devotee shall attain the cherished desire.

58-59. By making obeisance to Vālmīki in Śūlasthāna, the devotee shall become a poet. By worshipping Cyavanārka one shall be richly endowed with all desired benefits. Through the worship of Cyavaneśa, the man shall become the attendant of Śiva. By worshipping Prajāpāleśa, the devotee shall be endowed with wealth and foodgrains.

60. A man who worships Bālārka shall be endowed with learning and wealth. By taking a holy dip in Kuberasthāna the devotee shall certainly obtain a treasure-trove.

61. By resorting to the river Ṛṣitoyā, by taking holy bath there, and by giving gold to a Brāhmaṇa as gift, the man becomes pure and is liberated from sins.

62. By worshipping Śṛgāleśvara, the devotee is honoured in the Rudraloka. By worshipping Nāradāditya the devotee shall become endowed with the perfect knowledge of the three units of time.

63-64. By worshipping Nārāyaṇa the man shall attain liberation. After taking a holy dip in the waters of Taptakuṇḍa, the devotee should worship Mūlacaṇḍīśa. The man shall be absolved of all sins. He shall attain the desired object. By worshipping the fourfaced deity Vināyaka, the devotee attains the desired benefit.

65. By worshipping Kaṃbala, the devotee is endowed with flourishing wealth and food-grains. Through the worship of Gopālasvāmin, the devotee will possess cows and wealth. He will become a poet or a wise man.

66. The worship of Bakulasvāmin is the bestower of heavenly goal unto the man. By worshipping the goddess of Maruts, one shall attain the desired benefits.

67. Through the worship of Kṣemāditya, the man shall attain welfare and truthfully partake of all relished objects. By worshipping Vighnarāja Unnata, the devotee is not impeded by obstacles.

68. The two deities Jalasvāmin and Kālamegha, when worshipped, bestow all Siddhis. When the goddess Rukmiṇī is worshipped, she bestows the desired objects on men.

69. By worshipping Durvāseśa and Piṅgeśa, the devotee is liberated from sins. By taking the holy dip in the confluence of Bhadrā, the man sees auspicious things.

70. By taking the holy dip in Śaṅkhāvarta, the man shall become the master of all Siddhis. By taking the holy bath in the Mokṣa Tīrtha, the man shall be liberated from the ocean of worldly existence.

71. Merely by means of ablution in the Goṣpada (the pit made by the hoofs of cows), one shall attain all happiness. After going to the abode of Nārāyaṇa, a man does not grieve again.

72. Through the worship of Jaleśvara, a man shall realise all desired Siddhis. One who takes a holy dip in the well Huṁkārakūpa shall never attain a residence in the womb thereafter.

73. By worshipping Caṇḍīśa one shall attain the benefit of all Tīrthas. By worshipping Vighneśa stationed in Āśāpura, one shall never be harassed by obstacles.

74. A man taking the holy plunge in the Kalākuṇḍa shall undoubtedly attain salvation. By worshipping Kapileśa one shall attain a herd of Kapilās (tawny-coloured cows).

75. By worshipping Jaradgaveśvara the devotee is never overwhelmed by old age. The worshipper of Naleśvara is an enjoyer of pleasures. The worshipper of Karkoṭeśa is a wealthy man.

76. Through the worship of Hāṭakeśvara all the desires are fulfilled. The worshipper of Nāradeśa shall obtain devotion to Viṣṇu and Śaṅkara.

77. By worshipping goddess Mantravibhūṣaṇā, the devotee becomes one who deserves heaven. By worshipping Gaṇapati and Durgakūṭā, one shall be ever happy.

78. A person who worships Kauraveśvarī shall become one endowed with wealth and food-grains. By worshipping Suparṇeśā and Bhairavī, one shall be blessed with happiness.

79. By taking a holy dip in Bhāla Tirtha.[1] the man is absolved of all sins. By taking a holy bath in Kardamāla, one is relieved of sins.

80. By visiting Guptasomeśvara (the hidden Someśvara) one ceases to grieve further. By visiting Bahusvarṇeśvara one shall attain heavenly goal.

81. The man who worships Śṛṇgeśvara is not attacked by miseries. By taking a holy dip in the Tīrtha Nārāyaṇa, the man obtains liberation.

82. By worshipping Mārkaṇḍeśvara, the man becomes longlived. By taking the holy dip in the Koṭihrada and by worshipping Koṭīśvara one becomes happy.

83. By performing ablution in Siddhasthāna and by worshipping numerous Liṅgas thereof, the man shall become a Siddha on the earth.

84-85a. By visiting Dāmodaragṛha one attains excellent happiness. O auspicious lady, the holy centre Vastrāpatha is situated in the navel region of Prabhāsa. By worshipping god Bhava (Śiva) there, one shall directly become equal to Śiva.

85b-86. The Svarṇarekhā (the line of gold) is in Dāmodara. Brahmakuṇḍa (holy pool of Brahmā) is in Raivata. Kuntīśa and the highly refulgent Bhīmeśa are in Ujjayanta (mount Girnar). And Mṛgīkuṇḍa and Sarvasva—all these are remembered to be at the holy spot called Vastrāpatha.

87. By taking the holy bath in these, in the order, by worshipping Devas assiduously and by performing Tarpaṇa rite with water, one shall attain the benefit of all Tīrthas.

88. By taking the holy dip in Dunnābila and enjoying the pleasures one shall go to the heaven. By worshipping Gaṅgeśvara thereafter, one shall attain the benefit of the holy bath in Gaṅgā.

1. This is probably the Bhālaka Tīrtha of today near Bhālupura (*Kalyāṇa* 31. 1 *P.* 419).

89-90. O gentle lady, there are many Tīrthas on the mountain Raivataka (or Girnar). By taking a holy dip in them and by worshipping with devotion, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvara, Indra and other guardians of the worlds, the man obtains worldly pleasures and liberation. O beautiful lady, these Tīrthas have been narrated to you in brief.

91. In their midst there are infinite numbers of them. It is not possible to recount them all. There are detailed stories for each and everyone of these Tīrthas.

92-93a. Hence, the merit accruing from Prabhāsa has been succinctly mentioned by me. O Mohinī, there is no other Tīrtha in all the three worlds, equal to Prabhāsa. O auspicious lady, a man who takes a holy bath there competes with heaven-dwellers.

93b-95. If the greatness of Prabhāsa is written and kept in the house, there can be no danger or fear from goblins, thieves, serpents and enemies. He who devoutly listens to this and he who narrates this with concentration shall attain the goal of the good.

CHAPTER SEVENTYONE

The Greatness of Puṣkara

Mohinī said :

1. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, the greatness of Prabhāsa that is extremely conducive to the attainment of merit has been heard. Now I wish to hear the glory of Puṣkara.[1]

1. A sacred place, a lake (or rather three lakes) six miles from Ajmer (Rajasthan). It is the first among all *Tīrthas* (*Mbh. Vana* 82.35). The Mbh (*ibid* vv. 22 ff) waxes so eloquent in its glorification that other holy places pale into insignificance—the epic style of exaggeration. It is called *Puṣkara* as according to the *Pd. P.*, the lake was created out of a lotus-flower thrown by god Brahmā to kill a demon Vajranābha. Brahmā selected this place for performance of sacrifice and it is the western *Vedī*

2. It is the first one among the Tīrthas. It is sacred and destructive of sins. It is the abode of the Yajña of my father. Kindly narrate it to me in detail.

Vasu said :

3. O gentle lady, I shall recount to you the meritorious greatness of Puṣkara. Listen. It yields the desired benefits to all men always. It has within it many Tīrthas.

4-6. Indra and other Devas have settled here along with Viṣṇu. The elephant-faced lord, the sun-god, Kumāra and Raivata are present here. So also goddess Śivadūtī always stays here. She brings about the happiness of the holy centre. He who stays in the forest of Puṣkara[1] in the holy month of Jyeṣṭha, without exerting himself in worldly activities shall undoubtedly attain the merit of Yoga consisting of eight subdivisions. In this world there is no other centre holier than this.

7-8. Hence, this must be resorted to by excellent men with all possible efforts. The Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas and Śūdras whoever stay in the holy centre, are devotees of Brahmā in all respects. They bless all living beings. They go to the world of Brahmā where Yogins go.

9. The merit that a man obtains by plunging into all Tīrthas is derived by the man who takes the holy dip but once in the Jyeṣṭha Kuṇḍa (a holy pool of that name).

10. After reaching the forest of Puṣkara where the river Eastern Sarasvatī flows, a man is endowed with intelligence, memory, mercy, judgement, retentive power and comprehension.

(altar of a sacrifice) of Brahmā. This lake is regarded as next to the Mānasa lake in the order of sacredness, the other three being Bindu (near Sitapur NW of Ahmedabad), Nārāyaṇa at the mouth of the Indus in western Runn of Kaccha, and Pampā (near Anagondi, Karnatak). The temple of god Brahmā is the special feature of this holy place.

1. It appears that there was a forest in this region as Nakula is said to have conquered the forest-dwellers of Puṣkara (*Mbh. Sabhā* 32.8, also vide *Pd. P.* V. 18.217) The *Prāci Sarasvatī* flowed through it.

11. Those who stand on the banks of these rivers and merely look at the waters, attain the benefit of a horse-sacrifice and derive happiness.

12. There are three famous and pure peaks. There are three springs. There are three lakes also which are called Jyeṣṭha, Madhya and Kaniṣṭha.[1]

13-14. There is another very great Tīrtha called Nandā Sarasvatī, O chaste lady, to the west of that lake, about a Yojana from it. By taking the holy dip therein in accordance with the injunctions, and by making a gift of a milch cow to a Brāhmaṇa who is a Vedic Scholar, the man shall attain the abode of Brahmā.

15. There is a Koṭitīrtha here where a crore of sages had come. By taking a holy dip there and by worshipping Brāhmaṇas, the devotee is liberated from all sins.

16. By resorting to the hermitage of Agastya,[2] by taking the holy dip there and by worshipping the pitcher-born sage Agastya, the devotee becomes long-lived and enjoys pleasures. On death he attains heavenly goal.

17. The devotee should then go to the hermitage of seven sages. With the intellect not turned to anything else he should take a holy bath there and worship them with devotion. Thereby, he attains the same world as they.

18. By taking a holy dip in the hermitage of the Manus, the devotee is worshipped from all quarters. By taking a holy bath at the source of Gaṅgā, he attains the benefit of a holy dip in Gaṅgā itself.

1. Both the NP and Pd. P. mention three lakes—*Jyeṣṭha*, *Madhya* and *Kaniṣṭha* Puṣkara. Uṣavadāta's Nasik Inscr. No. 10 mentions his having donated gifts on their banks (Bombay Gaz. XVI p. 570). Now-a-days these three lakes are assigned to the trinity of gods (Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Rudra). *Bd. P.* III. 34.11 and *Vm. P.* 65.31 refer to the *Madhyama Puṣkara*, *Bd. P.* III. 35.39 states that *Kaniṣṭha Puṣkara* is 2 Yojanas from *Madhyama* Puṣkara and *Jyeṣṭha Puṣkara* was two miles to the West of *Madhyama Puṣkara*. The Sarasvatī is said to have flowed from this lake to the sea.

2. The hermitage of Agastya and the sacred pool named after him are near *Yajña Parvata*. The pilgrimage to Puṣkara becomes complete after bath in the Agastya Kuṇḍa (*Kalyāṇa* 31. 1. 290).

19. By performing ablution in the Jyeṣṭha Puskara lake and by making a gift of a cow to a Brāhmaṇa, the devotee enjoys all pleasures here and is honoured in the world of Brahmā.

20. By taking a holy dip in the Madhyama (middle) Puṣkara lake and by giving a plot of land to a Brāhmaṇa, the devotee attains the world of Viṣṇu riding in an excellent aerial chariot.

21. A man who takes a holy dip in the Kaniṣṭha Puṣkara lake and gives gold as a gift to a Brāhmaṇa attains all desired benefits and in the end is honoured in the world of Rudra.

22. By taking a holy dip in Viṣṇupāda and by giving something as gift to a Brāhmaṇa, the devotee attains all desired benefits, thanks to the grace of Viṣṇu.

23. By taking a holy bath in the Nāgatīrtha, by worshipping the Nāgas (Serpents) and by giving gifts to Brāhmaṇas, he rejoices in heaven for the period of a Yuga.

24. By performing ablution in the Piśācatīrtha and by giving food to a Brāhmaṇa, the devotee avoids the state of becoming a Piśāca (ghost). He shall go to heaven.

25. By taking a holy dip in the Śivadūtīhrada (the deep pool of that name), by worshipping Śambhu and by feeding the Brāhmaṇas on sweet cooked rice, the devotee is honoured in the heavenly world.

26. By taking a holy bath in the Ākāśa Puṣkara[1] that yields the benefit of the Mantras and Yogas, the man attains liberation, Truth; the truth has been stated to you.

27. He who meditates on the deity abiding in Ākāśa (a holy lake of that name) after taking a holy bath in Puṣkarāraṇya uttering the Mantras Āpo hi ṣṭhā etc. attains the eternal region.

28. If the constellation pertaining to fire-god coincides with the full moon day in the month of Kārttika, that Tithi is very great. The holy dip on that day in Ākāśa Puṣkara is meritorious.

1. A sub-Tirtha of Puṣkara; it is not mentioned elsewhere though Nārada praises it highly.

29. The man who takes a holy dip in the Madhyama Puṣkara lake when the constellation pertaining to Yama coincides with the full moon day in the month of Kārttika derives the same benefit as originates from the holy lake Ākāśa puṣkara.

30. The man who takes a holy dip in the Kaniṣṭha Puṣkara lake when the constellation pertaining to the deity Prajāpati (Rohiṇi ?) coincides with the full moon day in the month of Kārttika derives the same benefit as originating from bathing in the holy lake Ākāśa Puṣkara.

31. When the sun is with the constellation Bharaṇī, the Jupiter is associated with Krttikā and the moon is with the constellation Rohiṇī and it is the Nandā tithi, a bath taken at Puṣkara gives the full benefit of ablution in the Ākāśa Puṣkara.

32. When the sun is in the constellation Viśākhā and the moon is in Kṛttikā (the constellation Pleiads), that conjunction (yoga) is called Ākāśa Puṣkara—A person taking bath (in the Puṣkara lake at this juncture) goes to heaven.

33. This is an auspicious Tīrtha belonging to Brahmā. It has descended from the firmament. Those men who take a holy dip therein shall have the worlds of great rise and prosperity.

34. O chaste lady, many Tīrthas and shrines have been created by the sages and Siddhas in the forest of Puṣkarāraṇyaka in the Sarasvatī of Pañcasrotas (five currents).

35. It should be known that the Sarasvatī river is the cause of virtue and piety in all these. The charitable gifts of gold, plots of land and girls eight years of age in those Tīrthas yield great benefit.

36. He too who gives gifts of grains, gingelly seeds etc. to an excellent Brāhmaṇa in this holy centre derives worldly pleasures in this world. That man attains excellent state in the other world.

37. He who takes a holy dip in the confluence of Gaṅgā and the Sarasvatī and worships Brāhmaṇas attains the highest goal after enjoying the desired pleasures in this world.

38. The man who takes a holy bath in the tank called Aviyoga (non-separation) and offers Piṇḍas in accordance with the injunctions, leads the Pitṛs to the heaven.

39. By taking a holy bath in the well called Saubhāgyakūpa and by performing the Tarpaṇa rite to the ancestors, the man attains good goal as well as unequalled good fortune on the earth.

40. By taking a holy dip near, by touching and by worshipping the two mountains of delimitation of the boundary, the devotee attains the desired worlds as well as the benefit of pilgrimage with all its ancillaries.

41. By resorting to the deity Śiva called Ajagandha and by worshipping the lord in accordance with the injunctions, the devotee derives the desired benefits in this as well as in the other world.

42. He who worships Sāvitrī[1] installed on the mountain to the south of the lake shall be the knower of reality (of the principles) of the Vedas.

43-45a. O Mohinī, there are separate Tīrthas pertaining to Varāha, Nṛsiṃha, Brahmā, Hari, Śiva, Sūrya (the Sun-god), Soma (Moon god), Guha, Pārvatī and Jvalana (fire-god). O blessed lady, by taking a holy bath with great concentration and by making charitable gifts to Brāhmaṇas, the devotee attains good goal.

45b-46a. It is rare that people get opportunity of taking the holy dip, or performing penance, or making charitable gifts or staying in Puṣkara.

46b-47a. Even if one is stationed a hundred Yojanas away from Puṣkara but if one remembers Puṣkara devoutly at the time of bathing, the devotee shall attain the benefit of a holy dip in Puṣkara itself.

1. According to a legend, Sāvitrī, the consort of god Brahmā did not arrive at his sacrifice in time. In order not to miss the proper *muhūrta*, Brahmā married a cowherd's daughter Gāyatrī and commenced the sacrifice. On her arrival Sāvitrī found a rival—a co-wife—occupying her position near god Brahmā and got infuriated. She went up that hill where a temple is built for her on the top.

47b. Maṅkaṇa and others who attained Siddhi by their penance resorted to Puṣkara with delight.

48-50. In whatever place he may go, at Puṣkara, the pilgrim attains Siddhi desired by him. He too who mentions the name of Puṣkara, O daughter of Brahmā, derives the merits of taking a holy bath in Puṣkara. There is no doubt about this. He who listens to the greatness of Puṣkara with devotion shall attain the merit of holy ablution therein. He rejoices in heaven like a Deva.

CHAPTER SEVENTYTWO

The Power of Austerities of Gautama

Mohinī said :

1. O holy lord, O Vasu, the greatness of Puṣkara is heard. It is destructive of sins. Now kindly recount the greatness of the hermitage of Gautama.[1]

Vasu said :

2. O gentle lady, listen. I shall recount the excellent hermitage of Gautama. By visiting this place, the man does not encounter tortures any further.

1. The hermitage of Gautama is located at various places such as Ahiari in Tirhut, Ahiroli near Buxar. But here the manifestation of god Śiva is Tryambaka. The source of Godāvarī near it shows that Tryambakeśvar in Nasik district is meant here. Gautama's spiritual exploit in feeding sages throughout the famine of twelve years is described in the *Devī Bhāgavata* (xii. 9. 1-37) but the ruse of the ungrateful Brāhmaṇas to make Gautama guilty of a (fake) cow-slaughter given in the Devī Bh. (xii. 9. 47 ff) is edited out by the NP. The NP. attributes the installation of god Tryambaka to the austere Penance of Gautama which pleased god Śiva and the heavenly river Gaṅgā and as the Godāvarī she descended in the South due to Gautama's merit (also *Vide Pd. P. Uttarakhaṇḍa* 268. 52-54. But these episodes are later developments as the Mbh. does not mention them.

3. The hermitage of Gautama is meritorious. It is resorted to by multitudes of Devas and sages. It dispels all sins. It bestows peace and calmness from all kinds of harassments.

4. He who is endowed with devotional feelings and resorts to the hermitage of Gautama for a period of twelve years, attains the abode of Śiva. After going there, one ceases to suffer from any misery.

5. The place where the son of Māyādevī is engrossed in a severe penance, the Godāvarī and Gaṅgā are destructive of all sins.

6. O daughter of Brahmā, while that sage was performing penance, there was a terrible drought lasting for twelve years. It was destructive of all animals.

7. In that terrible period of famine, the sages became emaciated due to hunger. O splendid lady, they came from different lands to the hermitage of Gautama.

8. They submitted to Gautama who was performing penance, "Give us food whereby our life may cling to our bodies."

9. Thus requested by the sages, sage Gautama became sympathetic and merciful. He told them who were confident of success due to the strength of penance.

Gautama said :

10. "O sages, all of you stay in my hermitage. As long as the famine lasts, I shall respectfully give you food regularly."

11. After assuring the sages thus, thanks to his reliance on the strength of his penance, Gautama meditated on Gaṅgā that realizes all objects. With great delight in his mind, he meditated on Gaṅgā.

12-13. Immediately after being remembered, the goddess Gaṅgā came out from the bowels of the earth. On seeing Gaṅgā that flooded the whole surface of the earth, the sage sowed paddy seeds, in the morning and reaped the ripe harvest at midday. With the grains of that Śāli rice, he fed those sages.

14. Then the sages became delighted, partaking of the cooked rice they became contented. Joyously they took up their residence in the hermitage of Gautama.

15. O gentle lady, with great devotional feelings, the sage thus extended his hospitality to those sages by means of the Śāli rice-grains that ripened everyday.

16. Even as the leading sage fed those Brāhmaṇas everyday, the famine ceased at the end of twelve years.

17. When the time of plenty arrived, all those sages informed the excellent sage and went back to their respective lands once again.

18. O Mohinī, sage Gautama whose prowess was of such a nature performed penance for many years with perfect control over his sense-organs.

19. Thereafter, lord Ambikāpati (Śiva) became delighted with his penance. He appeared before the sage accompanied by Gaṇas and said— "Tell me, what is the boon you would choose to have ?"

20. On seeing Śiva, the lord of Devas, the three-eyed deity, the excellent sage fell on the ground in front of him and made obeisance.

21. Rising up immediately, he joined his palms in reverence and prayed to Him, "Grant me devotion unto your feet for ever.

22. O Śaṅkara, may I see you stationed on the mountain here near my hermitage. This is the boon I wish to have."

23. Thus requested, Śiva, the consort of Pārvatī, the bestower of desires on the devotees, granted him his presence there and made him delighted.

24. O chaste lady, the three-eyed lord stayed there in that very same form. Ever since that day, that mountain is glorified by the name Tryambaka.

25. Those who resort to Godāvarī, Gaṅgā and take their holy dip with devotion, are liberated from the ocean of worldly existence, O blessed lady.

26. By taking a holy bath in the waters of Godāvarī and by worshipping Tryambaka stationed on the mountain

by means of services, the devotees shall become Maheśvara themselves.

27. The greatness of Tryambaka has been succinctly described by me. Even your father Brahmā is not competent to describe it in detail.

28. As far as Godāvarī is directly visible, there are many holy hermitages on its bank.

29. There is no doubt about this that by having a holy dip in them in accordance with injunctions and by performing a Tarpaṇa rite to the Pitṛs and deities, a man attains his cherished desires.

30. O gentle lady, visible in some places and hidden thereafter, the meritorious river Godāvarī flooded the earth.

31. Where the great goddess Godāvarī had manifested herself, thanks to the devotion of men, the Tīrtha is highly meritorious. A mere holy dip therein is destructive of sins.

32. Thereafter, the goddess of invariable holy rites reached Pañcavaṭī and manifested herself clearly. She is the bestower of good goal Mokṣa to the people.

33. O daughter of Brahmā, he who takes a holy dip in the Godāvarī at Pañcavaṭī and observes holy rites, invariably shall attain cherished desires.

34. In the Tretāyuga, Rāma came to Pañcavaṭī and stayed there along with his wife and his younger brother. By staying here he made the river holier.

35. O splendid lady, everything has thus been recounted regarding the hermitage of Gautama. It is destructive of sins of those who hear and those who read. It bestows the desired benefit.

CHAPTER SEVENTYTHREE

The Greatness of Tryambakeśvara

Mohinī said :

1. O preceptor, the sacred anecdote of Gautama recounted by you has been heard. So also the greatness of Tryambaka at Pañcavaṭī on the Godāvarī.

2-4a. Now I wish to hear the greatness of Puṇḍarīkapura[1] and also how Mahādeva performed Tāṇḍava dance. O god on the earth (Brāhmaṇa), it is more meritorious than the most meritorious holy centres.

Vasu said :

Mahādeva is under the control of the devotees. He is the bestower of boons immediately. He manifests himself before the devotees and carries out what they wish.

4b-5. On one occasion, the great sage Jaimini, the disciple of Vyāsa was going on a pilgrimage to a holy place along with Agniveśa and other disciples. He went to the city of Puṇḍarīka, comparable to the city of the king of Devas.

6-9. It is prosperous and glorious. It is adorned on all sides by the trees blossoming in all seasons. It is rendered splendid by means of trees with cool shade, by large reservoirs of clear water; with very beautiful lotus-ponds which were occupied by different kinds of birds. It is frequented by women, celestial damsels and men having the lustre of Vidyādharas. It shines like an aerial chariot with pure shining houses. On seeing the splendour of that city, the sage became highly delighted. He was inclined to take a holy bath there in that excellent lake which is rendered fragrant by means of different kinds of flowers and trees with pleasant shades.

1. Puṇḍarikapura is generally taken as Pandharpur in Sholapur district of Maharashtra. But for the last eight centuries at least, it has been a centre of Vaiṣṇavism or rather of the *Waskarī* cult of Viṭhalā in Maharashtra Karnatak. That god Śiva performed a Tāṇḍava dance here at the request of Jaimini is not known to the tradition of saints—the flowers of the Viṭṭhala cult in Maharashtra. The author of the NP. being an east Indian, far away from Maharashtra, has vague ideas about far off places in Maharashtra. Hence the confusion about Tryambakeśvara and Pandharpur.

10. After taking rest for a short while on the banks having thick shade, the sage took a holy dip and performed the daily routine rites including the rites of Tarpaṇa to the Devas, sages and Pitṛs.

11. He made a Liṅga out of earth (clay) and worshipped it with various services such as Pādya, Arghya and others duly. He was not agitated.

12-13. He adored Śiva by means of scents, fragrant incense, lamps, Naivedyas and different fragrant flowers. When the sage stood by after worship, the lord who was pleased with him, manifested himself to him in that very same clay, Liṅga emitting the lustre of different kinds of jewels.

14-15a. On seeing lord Śiva directly, Jaimini fell on the ground like a staff. After getting up again he stood with palms joined in reverence. He then addressed Hari, half of whose body was that of Śiva, who dispels the anguish of those who seek shelter in him.

Jaimini said :

15b-16a "O God of gods, the Lord of the universe, I am blessed. I feel that I have accomplished all objectives of life inasmuch as you who are worthy of being meditated upon by great gods like Brahmā and others have personally revealed yourself before my eyes."

16b-17a. Then the delighted lord Girīśa placed his hand on Jaimini's head and told him—"O dear son, tell me what you wish ?

17b-18. On hearing those words of Śambhu, Jaimini replied, "May I see the lord accompanied by Ambā (Pārvatī) Vighneśa (Gaṇapati) and Kumāra (Kārttikeya).

Then Śaṅkara appeared before him accompanied by his son as well as by Ambā.

19a. Then the delighted lord asked again—"Tell me, dear son, what do you wish ?"

19b-20a. On seeing the merciful nature of the lord, of the preceptor of the universe, Jaimini smilingly said—May I see you performing the Tāṇḍava dance"[1]

1. In the following verses we have a graphic description of the Tāṇḍava dance of Śiva.

20b-21a. Then, in order to fulfil that desire of his, lord Ambikāpati remembered Śivā, Pramathas who are experts in different sports.

21b-22. The moment they were remembered, all of them led by Nandin, Bhṛṅgin and others came there chattering enthusiastically. After bowing down to the lord accompanied by Vighneśa (Gaṇeśa) Kūmara (Kārttikeya) and Ambā they remained silent and stood there with palms joined in reverence. They eagerly waited for the behests of the lord of the Devas.

23. Then at the behest of Jaimini, Śiva assumed a wonderful form with ornaments and dress of variegated nature, and began to dance. He shone with the tremulous creeper-like serpents appearing as kindled fire. A slight smile fiickered over his face. The crescent moon rendered the forehead splendid. His arms were lifted up like a banner.

24. He excelled the moon (in beauty and splendour) and its light by the brilliances of Bhasman (ashes) applied all over his body by him of beautiful eyes (or by his beautiful-eyed consort Pārvatī). His body had been rendered wet by the sprinkling of water of the celestial river (Gaṅgā) that flowed out of his matted hair. The crescent of the moon (on his crest was scorched by his blazing eye in the forehead but the nectar that oozed out of the moon brought back to life the hide of the king of beasts who created a roaring hissing sound.

25. When the peacock, the vehicle of Kumāra, caught hold of a serpent with its beak, it began to hiss (Phūṅkṛta). The head of the lotus-born deity (god Brahmā) was enlivened by the nectar that was oozing out, and he was reviled by it (Tumkṛta). The mouse that is the vehicle of Vighnarāja(Gaṇeśa) was afraid of the serpent and so it squealed (Cuṅkṛta). His own great bull became afraid at the roaring sound of the lion (that was resucitated), the fear was visible in its eyes and it began to bellow.

26. His lotus-like feet fell frequently on the surface of the earth that shook thereby. When he heard the excellent sound of musical instruments, he was delighted and hairs stood on their ends. His lotus-like feet were further brightened up by the

the jewels on the crowns of the Devas and Asuras. Gaṇeśa, Kārttikeya and Śailaputrī (daughter of the mountain-Pārvatī) were eagerly looking at his face.

27. The devotees who were highly delighted shouted cries of victory for him. The lord shone brilliantly with the Tāṇḍava dance that followed. He brightened the quarters.

28. Then, on seeing the dance of Maheśa Jaimini was immersed in the ocean of bliss. With great concentration, he eulogised the lord with hymn consisting of verses having one quatrain from the Vedic texts in each.

The Veda-Pāda Hymn :[1]

29. O goddess residing Kāmpilya, O mother of the universe, O deity whose lotus-like feet are bowed to by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva, obeisance to you.

30. O Gaṇapati, obeisance to you, O deity saluted by Gaṇeśa, Brahmā, Sun, Moon, Indra and Viṣṇu, O lord of Brahman or Brāhmaṇas.

31. I salute Kumāra who has gold earrings, whose forehead is stroked by the lotus-like tender hands of Umā and who wears lotus garlands.

32. Which man can adequately eulogise Śiva, imperceptible to Brahmā and others. By your vision my eulogy is born like the shower from the cloud.

1. VV.29-141 contain an eulogy of god Śiva. It is called *The Veda-pāda hymn* as every verse contains a *Pāda from* Vedic *mantras*. To take a few examples at random

V. 37 d. *Kṣetrāṇām pataye namaḥ*
The same as *Vāj. Saṁhitā* 16.18; *Tait. Saṁ* 4. 5. 2.

V. 53. d *ṛcaḥ sāmāni jajñire*

V. 67 d. *daridraṁ nīla-lohitam*
cf. *Tait-Sam.* 4. 5. 10. 1b

V. 82. d *gāye tvā namasā girā* Cf *ṚV* 8. 46. 17

V. 98. d. *yoṣā jāram iva priyam.* Cf *ṚV* 9. 32. 5*b*

Many more examples can be quoted but the above are enough to show that the title *Veda Pāda* is justifiable.

33. Obeisance to Śiva accompanied by Ambā, obeisance to Śarva, to Śambhu, Obeisance to Rudra who dances; obeisance to Sadasaspati (the lord of the assembly).

34. Obeisance to the deity who has split the world with his feet; who has split the walls of the egg (i.e. cosmic egg) with his head, who has wandered over the ends of quarters with his arms (the arms are stretched on to the quarters), obeisance to the lord of living beings.

35. Hail be to the deity having a pair of jingling anklets, to the deity wearing shining hides as clothes; obeisance to the deity having the lord of serpents as a girdle, obeisance to the lord of Paśus (Individual souls).

36. Salute to Soma; Kālakāla (Death unto the god of death); obeisance to the trident-armed Yogin. Bow to the pure one bedecked in bones; obeisance to the lord of the worlds.

37. Obeisance to the protector of the entire universe; Obeisance to the leader of all heaven-dwellers, obeisance to you the lord of mountains; obeisance to the lord of holy centres.

38. Obeisance to Śaṅkara (the bestower of bliss), salute to Maṅgala (the auspicious Deity), obeisance to the lord of riches, Hail to you the lord of food, obeisance to you the lord of Ātman; obeisance to the most bountiful god.

39. Obeisance to the eight-limbed one (one having the eight cosmic bodies). Salute to the excessively hearty one. Obeisance to the bestower of the desired things on devotees in distress. Hail to the destroyer of sacrifice; obeisance to the most delighted deity; obeisance to the lord of well nourished beings.

40. Hail to the lord of five elements; obeisance to the overlord of Kāla (God of Death, Time); obeisance to the lord of Ātman; obeisance to the lord of the quarters.

41. Obeisance to Maheśa, the creator of the universe; Hail to the Pināka-bearing god, the sustainer of the universe; obeisance to the fiery-eyed destroyer of the universe; obeisance to the one having manifold forms.

42. O Īśāna, obeisance to you; O Tatpuruṣa, obeisance to you; obeisance always unto you, to Aghora; O Vāmadeva, obeisance be to you. Obeisance to Sadyojāta (a form of Śiva).

43. Obeisance to one embellished with Bhasman. Hail to the destroyer of the fear of devotees. A bow to Bhava; to Bharga; to Rudra, to Mīḍhuṣ (the liberal god).

44. Obeisance to the thousand-eyed deity; to the deity accompanied by Ambā; obeisance to the thousand-rayed one; obeisance to the thousand-armed one; obeisance to the thousand-eyed Mīḍhuṣ (sun-god).

45. Hail to the god with good cheeks. Obeisance to Soma with good forehead; obeisance to one with good eyebrows; to one with good physical body; salute to you to extremely compassionate bountiful Lord.

46. Obeisance to one who always dispels the tremendous fear caused by the distress of worldly existence; Hail to you the invincible god; obeisance to Mīḍhus (the bountiful god) the victorious deity.

47. I salute the lord who is mass of bliss; I salute the lord who is beautiful in the course of his dance, who is the lord of all the worlds and who is the wonderful Sadasaspati (lord of the assembly).

48. I bow down to the imperishable supreme lord; to Īśa of fine-calf; to Īśa wearing beautiful silken cloth (?) I bow down to the lord who is capable of destroying demons and goblins. I bow to the lord whose friend is the lord of the Yakṣas.

49. I bow down to the half-man and half woman deity who is both dark and tawny-complexioned; who has half the characteristics of man; who has forelocks in one half of his body, who is naked in one half of his body and who wears the garlands of bones and lotus petals. (This is the Ardha-nārī form of Śiva.)

50. I bow down to Īśāna who is the lord of the mobile and immobile beings and who enables those who bow down but once, to him to cross the great ocean of worldly existence.

51. I salute Īśa who is the creator of the worlds; who is bestower of riches; who is the leader of Maruts (Devas) and who is the unvanquished conqueror.

52. I bow down to you the leader of the god of death, I salute to the upholder of the Mandākinī—Gaṅgā-river on the

head, I salute the lord who created these three worlds and who supports us all.

53. I salute that Īśvara who is omniscient; omnipresent, who is identical with all, who is a seer from whom Vedas viz. the Ṛks and Sāmans originated along with the Yajus.

54. I salute Lord Śiva, the excellent seer, out of fear from whom the past, present and future beings abstain from other (i.e. sinful) deeds and who overviews the universe on all sides.

55. I bow down to that Hara who annihilates, who restrains and checks the Devas and at whose behest Nārāyaṇa pervades the universe and stands by.

56. I bow down to that Mahādeva at whose behest, god Brahmā, the creator created this universe at the beginning of the Kalpa in the same manner as it was before.

57. I salute that Īśvara* whose Liṅga is worshipped day and night by the hosts of Maruts (Devas) whose eldest member is Indra, along with their wives.

58. I bow down to that Rudra by worshipping whom only for once formerly the Devas, Pūṣā and others attained their respective prowess and position.

59. I salute that god Īśāna who is Śiva. The quiescent ascetics know him well and worship him perpetually.

60. Perpetually do we offer obeisance to that auspicious body of yours, O Rudra, that has the splendour and refulgence of the lotus. O deity who have the cloth over the breasts of Umā spreading over his chest we bow down to it.

61. Obeisance to you of terrible emotional feelings. Obeisance to you of terrible sports; obeisanee to you of fierce (very deep) quiescence; obeisance to you of terrible anger.

62. O destroyer of Tripuras, obeisance to you whose feet rest on the chariots and horses of the Vedas and whose arms are equipped with the bow and arrows at the time of the conquest of Tripura).

63. O, Śaṅkara, I bow down to you whose bow-string

devam is probably a misprint for *Vande*.

is the serpent Vāsuki and who scatters arrows? May my salutes be to the great archer with Meru as the bow.

64. Obeisance to you to your, Paraśu (axe), to your trident of incomparable glitter. Salute to one identical with Hayagrīva (the horse-necked) or obeisance to your arrow.

65. O Hara, whatever other weapons are in your quiver they remove the necklaces of the wives of Asuras (i.e. they kill the Asura husbands, thus making them widows) I make obeisance to them.

66. Obeisance to you, to Aghora whose arms have been gently stroked with a toy-lotus by the daughter of the mountain. Obeisance to him who is praiseworthy to us.

67. O Nīlalohita, (Śiva) save me who am ignorant, uneducated, devoid of any other person for shelter and I am leaderless, indigent and wretched and in adversity.

68. O Īśa, protect me who am wicked and in a wretched condition. My face is deformed and I am of evil activities. With this vision of mine I do not see anyone other than you for my propitiation.

69. O merciful Śambhu, be our protector. We are being burned by the fire of worldly existence which has love, hatred and pride for its flames.

70. O Hara, of many great names, O oft-eulogised deity, protect me. I am after other men's wives. I live in other's houses. I am clad in others' clothes. I depend upon others' shelter. I eat other mens' food.

71. We do not endure insult heaped on your servants (i.e. devotees) by wicked people of the world. O lord of Devas, give us in plenty for many occasions.

72. O lord, even as the haughty wicked persons who never exert themselves, look on, fill us with all desired wealth. Grant us field and longevity.

73. O storehouse of kindness, you are indeed aware of our great feelings of shame for begging. Grant us to the full the eulogisers with all these riches.

74. My wife, mother, father and others excessively hate me. I am so very lean (indigent); Grant me great learning along with the wealth that nourishes the universe.

75. We are incompetent to perform rites whether the results are visible or invisible. O deity with Meru as your bow, grant the requisite strength to our bodies.

76. O lord of Devas, I have incurred a thousand evils. Everyday, I am being separated from what is desired and desirable. Do destroy the ailment in my heart and also this death.

77. Whatever ailments, ghosts, men and Devas oppress me, free me from oppression of all these. You are indeed very great.

78. You alone are our protector. There is no one else to rescue us. Hence, O lord of Devas, O lord of Brahmā, accept us and protect us.

79. O lord of Umā, you alone are my mother; you alone are my father, you are my grandfather. You are my longevity. You are intellect. You are glory. You are my brother. You are my friend.

80. Since, you alone are the doer of all rites, O lord of gods, forgive every evil deed committed by me.

81. There is no one else equal to you in lordly glory. There is no one equal to me in worthlessness. Hence, O Lord Mahādeva you are mine and I am yours.

82. In reverential terms* do I sing of you who are so gentle, whose smile is so sweet; whose person appears white with ashes; whose body is refulgent as the midday sun and whose face is beaming with delight.

83. It is our desired boon that we may continue to look at you, the president of the assembly while you should go on dancing for a hundred years looking favourably at us.

84. O lord, due to your favour we may live for a hundred years; may we be blessed ones, learned, scholars conversant with Vedic texts and free from ailments.

85. O Īśāna may we rejoice for a hundred years, drinking to our heart's content the nectar of your Tāṇḍava dance, sharing it with our wives and kinsmen.

*The reading *namasā girā* may mean, 'paying our obeisance to you, we praise you in words', but if the reading be *manasā girā* : 'I sing with my heart and soul and in words.'

86. O lord of Devas O Mahādeva, may we be happy for a hundred years, drinking honey, from your lotus-like feet to our heart's content.

87. May we be your servants, O Mahādeva for hundreds of years in every birth whether we are born as worms or serpents, ghosts or any other being.

88. O lord Īśa, O Mahādeva, may we hear for a hundred years, with our ears the sound of your vocal music, instrumental music, and behold your dance in the assembly chamber.

89. May we repeat for a hundred years your divine names that destroy mundane existence, thanks to their mere remembrance.

90. O Dhūrjaṭi (god with a massive matted locks of hair), O deity who burned the three cities merely by fixing the arrow to the bow, may we be unconquered by mental anguishes and bodily ailments perpetually for a hundred years.

91. When will I see the youthful poet, the lord of the subjects, the deity who has the charming lustre of gold and whose chest is in contact with the cloth over the breasts of Gaurī ?

92. When will I serve that greatly lustrous Sāmba who is surrounded by the Pramathas (all goblin-attendants), whose face is beaming with delight, who is fond of clothes (?), whose semen is of brilliant radiance.

93. Will Īśa, the blue-necked deity of special reddish complexion accept me who have committed many sins, have not performed even the smallest of meritorious deeds and am of wicked mind.

94. When Īśa of powerful neck who does not bow down (to anyone else) see me who am frightened, whose mind is agitated and who am (pierced and) fixed to the fiery trident of Kāla (god of death)?

95. O men, O songsters, if you are desirous of attaining the fulfilment of love etc., come on. Sing the glory of the friend of Dhanada (Kubera).

96. O my tongue, hail to thee. Loudly proclaim the eulogy of the hymn of the lord of Umā, the bestower of learning. Be as loud as the trumpet of a victorious king.

97. (Defective) O you unborn one ! You are quiescent. Do you not know that by Śiva's satisfaction the whole world gets satiated ? Drink of his name if you are thirsty.

98. O my mind, like a woman who embraces her beloved paramour embrace closely the deity who bestows the cherished desires, who is adorned by the moon, whose touch is pleasant and whose fragrance is enchanting.

99. I recite the best of hymns that is greater than the greatest, unto Maheśvara whose resplendent ray is great; whose arms are greatly mighty; whose body is immensely big; whose clothes are large and whose crown is big.

100. With these beautiful hymns I worship Ugramaheśa who is invincible, and proud. The hymns have been composed with great difficulty, yet with great respect, for the slightest of the pleasure of the lord.

101. Obeisance to Śiva, the destroyer of the three cities, Hail to the lord of the three worlds. Obeisance to the naked deity. Salute be to Hara the chief of deities. Obeisence to the lowest of all deities. Obeisance to one who is at the base of all.

102. Obeisance to the Vikāra (effect) ; obeisance to the Vikārin (cause), obeisance to you, to Bhava; obeisance to the source of origin of the world. Obeisance to you, O deity of many progenies, O deity of very wonderful features from whom the entire universe is born.

103. Obeisance to the deity whose foot-stool is encircled by the lustre of different jewels on the crowns of leading Devas, to the deity whose unguent is Bhasman (ashes); obeisance to the greatest deity than whom there is nothing greater.

104. Obeisance to you who perform beautiful Tāṇḍava dance. Within the mass of your matted hair, the king of serpents and the lord of herbs (moon) come into clash and so it is agitated. Obeisance to you in whom all this meets together and from whom all this departs.

105. I bow down to the lord whose neck is as blue as the peacock's plumage; whose lotus-like feet are worshipped by Viṣṇu; whose hands are reddish, thanks to the lac-juice from the feet of Umā; whose teeth have the golden lustre

and who is fair-complexioned I go near him and bow down to him.

106. I bow down to that Hara who is infinite, unmanifest, beyond contemplation or thinking; who is single, and has the quarters for his garments (i.e. is naked); who is unborn, who is an ancient sacrificial post and one whose body is the sky. He is more minute than the atom. He is greater than the greatest.

107. Without seeing the eternal Ātman stationed within, foolish persons wander among the mountain caves; to the west, to the north, to the south and to the east. They do not know whether he is below or whether he is above.

108. O Moon-crested lord, I bow down to this lord Śiva of great bliss; devoid of sorrow and pain; who is the great Ātman, who stays in the lotus-like cavity of the heart and from whom the quarters and the interstices of the quarters originate.

109. O Moon-crested lord, I hear that you are the greatest of all physicians. See me who appear with the great ailment named Bhava (mundane existence) originating from lust, deception etc. and protect me.

110. I am drowning in the ocean of distress. I do not have even an iota of happiness. I have not even touched anything meritorious. I have committed many sins and I am within the grip of the god of death. I am, therefore, frightened. Protect me from behind, from front, from below and from above.

111. O Lord, we are blessed with thy vision alone that is full of mercy and that is very cool, thanks to glancing at the charming face of Pārvatī. With that we shall cross the miseries and evils even as one crosses the waters by means of a boat.

112. I am immersed in the middle of boundless ocean of worldly existence. I clamour. My passion is by no means little. I am helpless. O Maheśa, save me who have served you as one serves a donor by means of sumptuous Dakṣiṇā.

113. O enemy of Yama, remembering my sins accumulated formerly and the harsh and rough face of Yama, I fear

enormously. Grant me sufficient life, should I be dead or should my life be broken.

114. When will the Pināka-bearing Ugra of many forms and features embrace me with his steady limbs, that emit fragrance, that are white, due to the fine Bhasman, that contain infinite means of pleasure and that are soft and mild ?

115. When will that lord of Devas who has golden features and golden vision protect me ? I am shouting loud to the lord. I am fallen into the ocean of worldly existence. I am extremely frightened like a frog stationed in an anthill wherein a serpent dwells.

116. When will I see Sāmba (Śiva) who has the colour and lustre of the sun, who is beyond darkness, whose smiles are charming, who is adorned with the digit of the moon and whose pair of eyes mingle with the side-glances of Gaurī ?

117. O ye primordial souls desirous of liberation, come and think of Śiva within your lotus-like heart. Indeed those persons who have decisively learnt the perfect Vedāntic knowledge, perpetually meditate on him for the sake of salvation.

118. Come, ye and take up the worship of Maheśa, Girīśa (Śiva) to your heart's content for the overlordship of the world. By worshipping him formerly, Hiraṇyagarbha (Brahmā) became the sole lord of living beings.

119. May they bow down to the single goal, the extensive glory; may those meritorious persons bow down to this Śrīkaṇṭha. He is glorious and prosperous. His feet are worthy of being saluted by the lord of Śrī (Viṣṇu). He is liberal. He is the supporter and bestower of prosperity and riches.

120. May those men who are desirous of good sons, worship this youthful Girīśa from whom Hiraṇyagarbha originated formerly—Hiraṇyagarbha who is self-born and who is the creator of the universe.

121. Of what avail is much talk ? Enough has been said. By resorting to him everything desired can be realised. By resorting to him day and night, formerly, sage Kumbhasambhava (the pot-born Agastya) whose hairs had turned grey became a youth once again.

122. O bees of my eyes (i.e. my eyes that resemble the bees) eschew everything else. Always resort to Śiva. He is full of fragrance. He is soft. He is conducive to happiness. He is full of sweetness. Or is he a honeyed one ?

123. (If you worship Śiva) you will be one devoid of a rival. You will be one who has conquered all men and gods. Obeisance to you O Speech ? Eulogise this well-known youth seated in the pit (i.e. the cavity of the heart).

124. O mind, whatever you think and desire for shall certainly and permanently accrue to you. The mind dwelling on worldly objects shall bring in misery (?) For the sake of good mentality we shall worship Rudra.

125. O merciful one, if out of ignorance we have improperly offended you before, forgive us entirely. Be to us like a father unto his sons.

126. On seeing me bitten by the infuriated serpent called worldly existence with the fangs such as lust, hatred, madness, covetiousness may the merciful Pināka-bearing-lord, the protector, protect me carefully without absentmindedness).

127. (?) After saying this, those who, O Rudra, bow down to you at the end of Samādhi (ecstatic trance) go (to heaven) (though) they be bitten by the serpent of rebirth (Saṁsāra). But I shall go unto you as a sūtrātman of the blue-necked deity while I shall be saluted even by Brahmā.

128. O heroic deity, stroke with your hand that is a penacea like ginger or pepper. O lord of the helpless ones, stroke us who are afflicted by the terrible fever of worldly existence, who have great ailments, who are the abodes of all sins and from whom the eyes of Kāla are not far off. You are the slayer of Kāla and you are being propitiated.

129. May he who is the lord of all Devas and Dānavas, who is the lord of the assembly-chamber, give us that great wealth, that tawny-coloured vision (?) whereby we shall conquer all these desired eight quarters, the places of the earth, of heaven, and of firmament and can have movement therein.

130. Obeisance to you, to Bhava, to Hara, Obeisance to the deity whose chest shines with the Bhasman, who is the

comrade when one is afflicted by the fear of the attack of worldly existence (Saṁsāra). Obeisance to the Pināka-bearing deity. Hail to Śiva, the protector of the universe; obeisance to the deity of perpetual dalliance; Bow to that lord whose comrade is never conquered nor killed.

131. Obeisance, obeisance to the lord of the chiefs of gods, Hail, Hail to the lord of Prajāpati; obeisance, obeisance, to the lord of the rulers of the earth; Bow again and again to the lord of Ambikā, obeisance, obeisance to the lord of Umā.

132. I bow down to Vināyaka, the permanent destroyer of the anguish of those who bow down; who is the poet of poets (or the wisest among the wise) and who is the most renowned. His crown or head has never been scraped due to the bowing down or its sound (?) (i.e. He has not bowed to anyone).

133. The Devas obtain Skanda in the battle (as their leader). The Brāhmaṇas obtain him in the sacrifice. His name is mentioned in the Vedas. I salute Subrahmaṇya, Om, O Subrahmaṇya, Om, O Subrahmaṇya, Om.

134. Obeisance to Śivā (Pārvatī), the mother of the universe, the beloved of Śiva; salute to the goddess whose person is one with that of Śiva. It was she who was born as the daughter of the mountain. She had braids of four matted hair. She was a lovely and elegant youthful maiden.

135. I bow down to Gaurī whose colour and lustre is that of gold, the anklets of whose feet are set with jewels, whose face is delighted, who has a parrot and a lotus in her hands and whose eyes are large. She is the person well conversant with words she speaks.

136. I bow down to this Umā who is the daughter of Menā, who cannot be comprehended, who is full of splendour, who cannot be measured and who makes her breasts whitened by means of the Bhasman at the time of embracing her beloved lord.

137. I bow down to Umā, who is resplendent, whose refulgence of limbs is magnet-like inaction and whom Hari, Brahmā and Indra bow down to. She is the goddess who stays near Girīśa (Śiva) and surveys the worlds.

138. I salute Gaurī whose breasts are prominent and plump; whose crest jewel is the moon; whose unguent all over the body is disturbed and who, for the sake of miserable living beings, urges her own splendour to be propitiated for the accomplishment of their desires.

139. I salute this daughter of Menā whose pastime is the protection of the wretched ones; who bestows honour and bliss; who is master of the lores and the auspicious words and who makes use of affable and courteous words for propitiation.

140. O Bhavānī, O goddess Śivā who dispel the great fear of distress of worldly existence, whose sole pleasure is your ornaments (?), grant us an excellent intellect free from hindrances whereby we shall cross all evils.

141. O Śivā, where and how can your equality be extended to ? The creation of the universe is your sport; Śiva is your husband. Hari is your servant; Indirā (Lakṣmī) is your maid-servant. So also are Śacī and Sarasvatī. You are the fortunate (blessed) bestower of wealth."

Vasu said :

142. After eulogising Śivā thus with this hymn, that great sage, bowed down to Sabhāpati (the lord of the assembly chamber). His eyes were filled with tears of affection.

143. He frequently imbibed the auspicious nectar of the Tāṇḍava of Īśa. After attaining all cherished desires, he obtained the state of being the chieftain of the Śiva Gaṇas at the end.

144. Like the women who embrace their husbands, pleasing words, realisation of powers, intellect, splendour and prosperity embrace that excellent twice-born who devoutly reads this hymn orally expressed by Jaimini.

145. If a king who is desirous of fighting, reads this hymn with respect, his enemies will quickly repair to the presence of the haughty god of death, entertaining fear in their hearts.

146. If a person belonging to one of the first three castes reads this eulogy ever and anon with devotional feelings towards Īśa, at the end of the fall of his body (i.e. death),

he remains at the sides of Śiva. He becomes pure and attains divine equality.

147. Those who are desirous of intellect and then read the hymn derive good intelligence. Similarly, those who are desirous of nourishment derive splendour and glory; men who are desirous of food-grains obtain food-grains. Men who are desirous of sons get sons.

148. He who retains in memory a quatrain or half of it, from this hymn, goes to the world of Śiva.

149. O splendid lady, that spot is a great Tīrtha where Śiva performed his Tāṇḍava dance. It is more meritorious than the most meritorious of the Tīrthas. By taking a holy bath there, one is liberated.

150. The excellent man who performs Śrāddha to the Pitṛs there, leads his ancestors to the heaven. No doubt need be entertained in this respect.

151. If he gives a Brāhmaṇa, a cow, gold, plot of land, bed, cloth, umbrella, beverages, or cooked rice at that place, it becomes everlasting.

152. He who listens to, or narrates this story of Puṇḍarīkapura* shall be the favourite of Rudra.

CHAPTER SEVENTYFOUR

The Glory of Gokarṇa

Mohinī said :

1. O preceptor, the narrative of Puṇḍarīkapura recounted by you, has been heard. Kindly instruct me in the greatness of the holy centre Gokarṇa.[1]

*De, p. 161 identifies Puṇḍarikapura with Pāṇḍupura which he regards the same as Pandharpur, the centre of Viṭṭhala cult in Maharashtra.

1. A sacred Śaiva Kṣetra, in Kuṁṭā Tehsil of North Kanara district. It is about 30 miles south of the temple God. The NP. does not state the story how this *Ātmaliṅga* of god Śiva got twisted like a cow's ear due to Rāvaṇa's frantic efforts to uproot it and take it to Laṅkā. It tells us how it was

Vasu said :

2. Listen, O Mohinī, I shall recount to you the Tīrtha Gokarṇa, which is a holy centre of Hara; which yields merit unto men and which is destructive of all sins.

3. O fair-complexioned lady, it is situated on the shores of the western sea. It extends to one and a half Yojanas. By its mere sight it yields salvation.

4. When the surface of the earth was gradually dug up by the sons of Sagara, O gentle lady, the ocean increased in size and flooded the land nearby.

5-6a. It flooded an area extending to thirty Yojanas (360 kms) inclusive of the holy centre, sacred water-reservoirs and forests. Then Devas, Asuras and human beings who had been staying there left that spot and occupied Sahya and other mountains.

6b-7a. As they pondered over the fact that the holy centre named Gokarṇa became hidden under the sea, the excellent sages made up their mind to reclaim it from the sea.

7b-8. All of them who had occupied the upper ridges of the mountain consulted together. Desirous of seeing Paraśurāma who had settled on the mountain Mahendra, O gentle lady, the excellent sages went there with the desire of reclaiming Gokarṇa.

9-10. After climbing the mountain, they saw his hermitage that was pleasing in all the seasons; that was teeming with both wild ruthless animals as well as tame and domesticated ones. The whole penance-grove contained a dense growth of fruit-bearing trees in full bloom. It spread its cool shade; it was incomparable. The wind was very fragrant and pleasant.

11. After reaching the penance-grove, they entered the hermitage that was resonant with Vedic chants. They were delighted in their minds, and they went in (in the order of their seniority in age) with the aged ones going ahead.

submerged in the sea-water and how sages went in deputation to Paraśurāma who ordered the sea-god to vacate this part of the land around Gokarṇa lest he should be constrained to evaporate the sea by his missiles. The seagod yielded. The story is similar to that of Dāśarathi Rāma at the time of building *Setu* to Laṅkā.

12. They saw that ascetic comfortably seated in the pasture on Brahmāsana over a soft deer-skin and surrounded by disciples.

13. They approached the sage how was the most excellent one among the descendants of Bhṛgu; who was like the resplendent fire of world destruction that had become tranquil after burning the three worlds, and they saluted him humbly.

14. On seeing those sages come, the leading scion of the family of Bhṛgu, properly (with due formalities) and respectfully greeted them with Arghya, Pādya etc.

15-16. When they were seated after the hospitality had been duly extended, the descendant of Bhṛgu (Paraśurāma) said :— "O blessed ones, welcome to you. Tell me wherefore you have come here ? Confide in me. What is it that I can do for you ?" Then the excellent sages told Rāma why they had come.

17. "O excellent descendant of Bhṛgu, know us to be the sages residing in Gokarṇa. We have been dislodged from that holy centre by the sons of Sagara who were digging the earth.

18. O leading Brāhmaṇa, it behoves you to grant us back the excellent holy place (called Gokarṇa) by means of your own power, after causing the waters of the ocean to recede".

19-20a. On hearing their words, the sage who had already set aside his weapons, thought over the problem. He considered that the protection of good men was righteous on his part and so took up his bow and arrows. He set off along with them.

20b-21. Descending from the mountain Mahendra, he hastened in the direction of the South-West. Quickly crossing the mountain, he reached the sea-shore along with the residents of Gokarṇa.

22. After resting there for a short while, the most eloquent sage spoke to Varuṇa, the lord of aquatic animals, in a voice as resonant as thunder.

23. "O Pracetas (Varuṇa) reveal yourself to me. I am Rāma, the descendant of Bhṛgu. I have come here along with

the sages on a certain mission. There is an urgent task to be performed by you".

24. Although the lord of the aquatic animals was thus called by Rāma, and although he heard his words clearly, Varuṇa, the lord of aquatic animals, out of haughtiness, did not come to Rāma.

25. When he did not come out even after being repeatedly invoked, Bhārgava (Paraśurāma) became infuriated and seized his bow.

26. Bhārgava fixed to that bow, an arrow, the deity of which was the firegod, for drying up the lord of the rivers, the ocean.

27. When the miraculous missile was fitted on to the bow by Bhārgava of great soul, O gentle lady, the ocean became agitated. The aquatic animals were in a confused state.

28. Scorched by the missile of Rāma, Varuṇa became exceedingly frightened. Approaching him in his own personal form Varuṇa grasped Rāma's feet in reverence.

29. Then Rāma withdrew his missile and immediately spoke to Varuṇa, "O lord, let Gokarṇa be visible, cause your water to recede".

30-31a. Then at the behest of Rāma, the ocean withdrew the water flooding Gokarṇa. After worshipping lord Śaṅkara at the holy place called Gokarṇa, Rāma went back to the mountain Mahendra. Those Brāhmaṇas however stayed there itself.

31b-32a. All of those sages observed holy rites, performed penance and attained great bliss. They attained a state from which there was no return, thanks to his love for that holy centre.

32b-33a. Being conscious of its greatness Śaṅkara perpetually stays there with Bhūtas(goblins), Devas and goddess Pārvatī. By visiting Maheśa (Śiva) at Gokarṇa, sins are dispelled immediately like a dry leaf in a storm.

33b-35. It is not out of compulsion that men become interested in resorting to that holy centre. All living beings mobile and immobile, that die there, immediately go to the eternal heaven.

36. The holy place named Gokarṇa by mere remembrance of which a man will become absolved of all sins, is the abode of all Tīrthas.

37. Through the vision of the deity, these men derive those benefits which they derive by taking holy bath in all other sacred places and by worshipping Sadāśiva.

38. Those who stay there free from lust, fury etc. attain Siddhi in a short time.

39. Those who stay there wedded to the vow of celibacy, quiescent and invariably engaged in Japas and Homas accomplish their desired Siddhis.

40. O chaste lady, the benefit accruing from charitable gifts, Homas, Japas etc and the worship of Pitṛs, Devas and Brāhmaṇas at that place is a crore times more than that in other centres.

41. Thus, O gentle lady, the greatness of the sacred place called Gokarṇa has been recounted to you. It dispels all sins of those who listen to and read it.*

CHAPTER SEVENTYFIVE[1]

The Greatness of Lakṣmaṇācala

Mohinī said :

1. O Vasu, the greatness of Gokarṇa that is destructive of sins has been heard. Now it behoves you to recount the greatness of Lakṣmaṇa also.

*The printed text of the NP. gives the introductory remark as follows : "Thus the greatness of Jyotirliṅga (luminary Liṅga) Tryambakeśvara is completely recounted. Henceforth, the greatness of Gokarṇa is being recounted."

1. The NP. takes this opportunity to restate the story of Rāma. His effort to apply the *Vyūha* Theory to Rāma shows the then dominance of the Pāñcarātra system. The NP. gives a twist to the story about the end of Lakṣmaṇa. VR. 7. 106. 8-17 tells us that as soon as Rāma ordered Lakṣmaṇa to die, he straightway went to the bank of Sarayū and by a Yogic process

Vasu said :

2. O gentle lady, listen. I shall describe the greatness of Lakṣmaṇa. On seeing the deity there, a man is liberated from all sins.

3-5. (The Caturvyūha concept is applied to Rāma here). The god (Lakṣmaṇa) is Saṅkarṣaṇa himself out of the incarnation of the four Vyūhas (manifestations of Lord Viṣṇu or Vāsudeva.) He is the thousand-hooded serpent Śeṣa.

6. On being requested by Brahmā and others formerly, lord Ramāpati (Lord of Lakṣmī, Viṣṇu) was born of king Daśaratha in four forms with the names of Rāma etc.

7. After some time, O gentle lady, the leading sage Viśvāmitra approached the king and requested him for Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa for guarding his Yajña.

8. Afraid of the curse of the sage, king Daśaratha entrusted to him his sons Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa who were loved by him more than his own life.

9-10a. They went to the forest and guarded the Yajña of Viśvāmitra, the leading sage. Rāma killed Subāhu and Tāḍakā. With the arrow charged with the missile called Mānavāstra, he cast off Mārīca far into the ocean. Thus he pleased Viśvāmitra.

10b-11. From the excellent sage who was delighted, he acquired a group of miraculous missiles. For sometime, he stayed there with his younger brother duly honoured by the sage. Thereafter, he was taken to the city of Janaka by Viśvāmitra.

12. Then king Janaka asked Viśvāmitra who had been duly received and honoured. "Of what great Kṣatriya king's sons are these boys ?

13. Then the excellent sage told him that they were two brothers Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa and that they were the sons of king Daśaratha.

gave up his mortal coil. The NP. states that after Rāma's order, Lakṣmaṇa went to the south and performed penance on a certain hill and gave up his body by a Yogic process after Rāma's departure to heaven.

The information about Lakṣmaṇācala is too scanty to locate it geographically.

14. On seeing Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa the king of Videha Janaka, became much delighted. In his mind he decided that they should become the husbands of his daughters Sītā and Urmilā.

15-16a. The sage who was aware of the three units of time understood his desire. He joyfully told Janaka, "show him that bow which had been a deposit of Maheśvara and has been placed in the Svayaṁvara (self-choice of a husband by the girl) of Sītā.

16b-17a. On hearing the words of Viśvāmitra, the king got that bow brought immediately through three hundred of his servants. He showed it to Rāma with great enthusiasm.

17b-18a. With his left hand, Rāma lifted that bow of Śiva instantaneously. He tied the string, stretched it and broke it suddenly like a lordly elephant breaking a sugarcane stem.

18b-19a. Then the king of Mithilā (Janaka) was highly pleased. He duly honoured Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa and offered his two daughters to them in accordance with the Śāstric injunction.

19b-20a. From the leading sage Viśvāmitra he understood that king Daśaratha had two more sons. He invited Daśaratha along with those two sons and gave in marriage his brother's daughters to them.

20b-22a. He was duly honoured by Videha. At the behest of the sage, king Daśaratha went back to Ayodhyā along with all the four sons who had been duly married. On the way, Rāma suppressed the haughtiness of Paraśurāma. Along with his brothers and father, he spent many years at Ayodhyā joyously.

22b-23a. He had his own splendour explained to him by Vasiṣṭha and other scholars. Rāma understood his own splendour called Brahman, but he pretended to be a human being.

23b-25a. Then king Daśaratha became delighted on observing that his son had learnt everything that should be learnt. He, therefore, made preparations for crowning him as the Heir-Apparent. Kaikeyī, the youngest but the most beloved of all his queens, came to know of this. With stubbornness, she prevented it and wanted her own son to be crowned thus.

25b-26. To please her, Rāma went to the forest though not permitted by his father. Accompanied by his wife Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa, the son of Sumitrā, he went to Citrakūṭa hill, O splendid lady. For some time he remained there alone, assuming the dress and features of sages.

27-28a. On hearing of the death of his father, Bharata returned from his maternal uncle's house. On knowing that his father had died crying "Hā Rāma", Bharata rebuked Kaikeyī and went to Rāma to persuade him to return.

28b-31. Rāma gave his sandals and made Bharata return. He then went to the hermitages of Atri, Agastya and Sutīkṣṇa, Thus he spent twelve years in those places. The prosperous scion of the family of Raghu (i.e. Rāma) went to Pañcavaṭī accompanied by his wife and younger brother. He stayed in the place called Janasthāna. He slew Triśiras, Khara and Dūṣaṇa who had been incited by Śūrpaṇakhā who was rendered ugly by Lakṣmaṇa. Then fourteen thousand Rākṣasas came there. With the iron arrows, having feathers of variegated colours, he (Rāma) led them to Yama's abode.

32-33. On hearing about this, the king of Rākṣasas (i.e. Rāvaṇa) caused them to go away (from the hut) by showing Mārīca who had assumed the form of a golden deer, and abducted Sītā. He killed Jaṭāyus who had obstructed him on the way. He then took Sītā to Laṅkā.

34-35a. The brothers returned and began to search for Sītā who had been abducted. They saw Jaṭāyu and cremated him when he died. Rāma then killed Kabandha, blessed Śabarī and came to Ṛṣyamūka.

35b-36a. At the instance of Hanumān, he became the friend of Sugrīva, the king of Monkeys. He then killed Vālin his enemy and made Sugrīva the king.

36b-37. On being ordered by Sugrīva, the monkeys who had come from all places and whose leader was Hunumān, searched for Sītā. They then reached the southern ocean. From the words of Sampāti they came to the conclusion that she (Sītā) was in Laṅkā.

38. Then the monkey Hanumān alone reached Laṅkā, on the other shore of the ocean. There he saw the chaste lady, the wife of Rāma.

39-40. He created confidence in her by giving her the jewelled ring of Rāma. He told her that both of them were hale and hearty. From her he took the crest-jewel. He then destroyed the trees in the Aśoka grove, and killed Akṣa (the prince) along with his army. He voluntarily submitted to captivity at the hands of Indrajit and so could talk to Rāvaṇa.

41. He then burned the entire city of Laṅkā and met Sītā once again. After taking her permission, he crossed the ocean and told Rāma about her.

42. On hearing that Sītā was in the abode of the demon, he came to the ocean along with an army of monkeys.

43. With the permission of the ocean, he caused the bridge to be made over the great sea by means of huge boulders from the peaks of mountains and reached the other shore. He encamped his army there.

44. Although his younger brother Vibhīṣaṇa advised Rāvaṇa to return Sītā to her husband, he did not like it.

45. Kicked by Rāvaṇa, Vibhīṣaṇa sought refuge in Rāma and Rāma laid siege to Laṅkā.

46. Thereafter, his counsellors, ministers, sons and servants were ordered by him to fight. In the battle with those two, they were all destroyed by the leading monkeys.

47. Lakṣmaṇa killed Indrajit by means of sharp arrows. Rāma killed Kumbhakarṇa and Rāvaṇa.

48-49. He made Vibhīṣaṇa perform the obsequies of Rāvaṇa. He asked his beloved to enter fire and purify herself. Rāma then gave Vibhīṣaṇa the lordship of the Rākṣasas, the city of Laṅkā and life till the end of the Kalpa. Having thus completed his holy vow of spending fourteen years in the forest, Rāma returned to Ayodhyā by the aerial chariot Puṣpaka along with Sugrīva and Vibhīṣaṇa.

50-51. Taking Bharata who was staying in Nandi-Grāma, he entered the city of Ayodhyā. He then bowed to all mothers. The other brothers made the priest Vasiṣṭha crown Rāma in the kingdom. Lord Rāma ruled over the subjects as though they were his own bosom-born sons.

52. The knower of virtue (Dharma) as he was, he was frightened due to the rumour current among the people and so

he abandoned Sītā. Sītā reached the hermitage of Vālmīki and lived there comfortably.

53-54. She gave birth to two sons well-known by the name of Kuśa and Lava. They were good singers. After performing the requisite holy rites for them, Vālmīki the liberal-minded sage, composed Rāmāyaṇa and taught it to them. The two brothers used to sing this in the Yajñas and assemblies of the sages and so they became famous.

55-57a. When Rāma performed a horse-sacrifice, they came to that assembly and sang the poem. Delighted to hear his own story sung, Rāma invited the sage along with Sītā. Sītā, the mother of the universe, informed Rāma that they were his sons. She entered a crevice in the ground. It was a great miracle.

57b-58a. Thereafter, Rāma observed the vow of celibacy and performed Yajñas and other rites. For thirteen thousand years, the most excellent among the Raghus stayed on the earth.

58b. Then after some time Durvāsā* came there, on being sent by Brahmā for going back to Vaikuṇṭha.

59-60. O gentle lady, in an isolated place he told Rāma "Let no one come here. If anyone comes, let him be worthy of being killed". Rāma promised it.

61. Rāma called Lakṣmaṇa and said :—"Stand here at the threshold. He who comes in will be worthy of being killed". He said, "So be it" and began to carry out Rāma's behest. He did not allow anyone to go near Rāma.

62-64a. While Rāma was sitting alone with Kāla and discussing, Durvāsā who came to know it approached Lakṣmaṇa. On seeing him come Lakṣmaṇa told him after due prostrations— "Kindly wait for a while. Rāma is busy in the council chamber."

64b-65. On hearing these words, Durvāsas who wanted to carry out the purpose of Yama (god of death) said to Lakṣmaṇa angrily—"Allow me to enter; otherwise I will reduce you to ashes. Remember it".

66. On hearing the words of Durvāsas, Lakṣmaṇa became perplexed. Afraid of the sage, he entered within to inform his elder brother.

67. On seeing Lakṣmaṇa, Kāla who had already completed his discussion stood up and said :— "Keep your promise" He was bidden farewell to by Rāma and went away.

68. Then Lord Rāma, the most excellent among the righteous ones, came out and propitiated the sage Durvāsā and fed him.

69-70. After feeding him and bidding him farewell after due obeisance, Rāma said to Lakṣmaṇa—" Brother, Lakṣmaṇa, a delicate situation has arisen due to Dharma. As a result of it, you have become worthy of being killed by me. Fate indeed is more powerful. Abandoned by me, now you can go wherever you please."

71. Lakṣmaṇa bowed down to Rāma who adhered to Truth and Virtue. He went towards the south and performed a penance on the mountain.

72. Lord Rāma too, at the request to Brahmā, re-entered his abode without excitement. The people of Ayodhyā and Kosala accompanied him.

73. Those who thought of Rāma and plunged themselves in Gopratāra in the Sarayū entered Rāma's splendid abode that is rare even to the Yogins. They attained divine bodies.

74. After performing penance and observing Yogic practices, Lakṣmaṇa followed Rāma by his Yogic power. He then re-entered his unchanging abode.

75. Lakṣmaṇa granted that mountain his perpetual presence and then continued his regular duty. Hence, this holy centre is excellent.

76. Those who see Lakṣmaṇa on the Lakṣmaṇa mountain with great devotion, are blessed and contented. There is no doubt about this that they go to the abode of Hari.

77. They praise charitable gifts in the place, of gold, plots of land, cows and horses. Whatever is given becomes everlasting in its benefit. The homa and the Japa too derive great benefits.

78. Of what avail is much talk? Its mere sight is of rare occurrence. O gentle lady, if it is seen, there is salvation undoubtedly.

79. Both he who listens to this story of Rāma along with the anecdote of Lakṣmaṇa and he who tells this story become great favourites of Rāma.

CHAPTER SEVENTYSIX

*The Greatness of Setu**

Mohinī said :

1-2a. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, well done. It is very nice, that the Rāmāyaṇa has been narrated by you. It is destructive of all sins of men and conducive to the increase of merits. Now I wish to hear the excellent greatness of Setu.[1]

Vasu said :

2b-3a. O gentle lady, listen, I shall recount to you the excellent greatness of Setu on seeing which, O queen, one is liberated from the ocean of worldly existence.

3b-5. The very sight of the Setu is meritorious. Lord Rāmeśvara there grants immortality to men by its vision only. By worshipping Rāmeśvara with fully controlled mind, a man enjoys all prosperities and glories. No doubt need be entertained in this respect. There is another holy centre here Viz. : Cakratīrtha. It is destructive of sins.

6a. The holy bath, charitable gifts, Japa and Homa there, facilitate everlasting benefits.

*The line of rocks jutting out of the sea between Rāmeśvara & Śrī Laṅkā is supposed to be the relic of the bridge that was built by Rāma with the help of monkeys. It is regarded holy even in the Bh. P. (VIII.14.31,X.79.15) Parāśara (XII.65-67) recommends a visit to Setu as atonement for *Brahmahatyā*.

1. As compared with the *setu-māhātmya* in SK. P. III. chs. 1-52, this chapter of 20 verses shows that the NP. gives a brief sketch of the Setu and sub-Tīrthas like Agastya, Agnī, Jaṭā, Sītā-Kuṇḍa near it. Some Kuṇḍas, especially in the temple of Rāmanātha (i.e. Rāmeśvara) are in good conditions and one feels like taking bath (or basketful of water) from each. The *Phalaśruti* of these baths is the usual routine one.

6b-7a. He who goes to Tālatīrtha and takes his holy dip there, attains excellent birth and rejoices on the earth like a Deva.

7b-8a. Then, O blessed lady, after reaching the holy centre Pāpavināśana (a Tīrtha Destructive of sins) and by taking a holy bath, the man is rid of all sins. He is honoured in the heaven.

8b-9a. He should then go to Sītākuṇḍa and perform the rite of ablution perfectly. By performing the Tarpaṇa rite of the Pitṛs and Devas, he shall attain all desires.

9b. By approaching the Maṅgala (auspicious) Tīrtha and by taking a holy dip, he is liberated from sins.

10. By taking a holy bath in the tank called Amṛtavāpī the man attains immortality. By taking a holy bath in Brahmakuṇḍa a man shall attain the world of Brahmā.

11. By performing ablution in the Tīrtha of Laksmaṇa, a man attains the goal of Yogins. By taking the holy dip in Jaṭātīrtha a man becomes free from illness.

12. By taking a holy bath in the Hanumatkuṇḍa a the man becomes unconquerable to the enemies. By plunging into the Agastya Tīrtha, the man becomes blessed with sons and wealth.

13. The man who plunges into the Rāmakuṇḍa attains the world of Rāma. By means of ablution in the Lakṣmītīrtha, the man shall become fortunate and handsome.

14. By taking a holy dip in the Agnitīrtha, the man is liberated from all sins. By means of ablution in the Śivatīrtha, the attainment of Śiva's world becomes possible.

15. One who has taken a holy dip in the Śaṅkha-tīrtha does not attain a wretched state (hell). By taking a holy dip in the Tīrthas, Yamunā etc. he goes to the heaven.

16. By plunging into the Koṭitīrtha one attains the benefit of all Tīrthas. A man who takes a plunge into the Sādhyāmṛta attains the same world as that of the Sādhyas.

17. By taking a holy dip in the Sarvatīrtha, a man attains cherished desires. One who takes a holy dip in the Dhanuṣkoṭi duly, is liberated from bondage.

18. A man taking a plunge in the Kṣīra-kuṇḍa shall attain various worldly pleasures. By taking a dip in the Kapitīrtha a man does not take any ignominious rebirth.

19. One who takes a holy dip in the Gāyatrī and the Sarasvatī is liberated from sins. By taking a holy dip in the Tīrtha Ṛṇamocana etc. the devotee is rid of indebtedness.

20. O splendid lady, thus the greatness of the Tīrthas at the Setu has been recounted. It is destructive of all sins of those who read and those who listen to it.

CHAPTER SEVENTYSEVEN

Sanctity of the Tirthas in Narmadā

Mohinī said :

1. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, the excellent greatness of Setu has been heard by me. Now I wish to hear the collected list of the Tīrthas on the river Narmadā.[1]

Vasu said :

2. Listen, O Mohinī, I shall recount every thing. There are four hundred most important Tīrthas on both the banks of the Narmadā together.

1. The Narmadā, though not mentioned in the Vedic literature is eulogized in the *Mbh. Vana* (chs. 121-122) and Purāṇas like the *Mt. P.* (chs. 186-194, 554 verses), the *KP.* 2. (chs. 40-42, verses 189), the *Pd. P. Ādi* (chs. 13-23, 739) while *SKP.* has devoted one complete book *Revā-Khaṇḍa* to it. As compared with the above, the treatment of Narmadā in the NP. in 35 verses is sketchy. Narmadā is superior to Gaṅgā as its mere sight inmediately sanctifies the seer. (V. 31). Thousands of sacred places happen to abide in various parts of Narmadā is a Purāṇic exaggeration. People normally visit its source (Amarakuṇṭaka), Māhiṣmatī (or Oṁkāra Māndhātā) and Bhṛgukaccha (Broach). Routine recommendations for the performance of *Śrāddha, Dāna, Japa* are the features of every Tīrtha need not be repeated.

3. There are eleven Tīrthas on the northern bank and twentythree on the southern bank. The thirtyfifth Tīrtha is said to be at the meeting place of the Revā with the sea.

4. From the mountain Amarakaṇṭaka (where the Narmadā rises) round the Oṁkāra Tīrtha within two Krośas kms) in all the quarters, there are three and a half crores of Tīrthas.

5. There are a crore of Tīrthas situated in the confluence of the Kapilā (with the Narmadā). A hundred thousand Tīrthas are founded in the Aśoka grove.

6. A hundred Tīrthas are at the Aṅgāragarta, ten thousand at Kubjā,* a thousand in the confluence with Vāyu and a hundred Tīrthas of Sarasvatī are situated here.

7. They know that there are two hundred holy spots in the Śuklatīrtha, a thousand in Viṣṇutīrtha, a thousand in Māhiṣmatī and ten thousand holy spots in the Śūlabheda.

8. There are a thousand holy spots in the Devagrāma village, there are seven hundred in Ulūka. There are a hundred and eight Tīrthas at the confluence of the Maṇinadī.

9. As many Tīrthas are in Vaidyanātha, and as many in Ghaṭeśvara. There are a hundred and fifty thousand sacred places in the meeting place of Revā (Narmadā) and the sea.

10. There are eightyeight thousand Tīrthas in Vyāsa and also hundreds of islands. In the confluence of the Karañja, ten thousand and eight Tīrthas are situated.

11. In the confluence of the Eraṇḍī (modern Uri) there are a hundred and eight Tīrthas, there are sixtyeight tīrthas, in the Dhūtapāpā and one and a half crores in the Kokila.

12. O queen of men, there are a thousand Tīrthas in Romakeśa and a thousand in Dvādaśārka. In the Śuklātīrtha there are eight hundred lakhs and two thousand Tīrthas.

13. They know that in all confluences of rivers with Narmadā there are hundred and eight Tīrthas. There are five hundred Tīrthas in Nandā, the confluence of the river Kāverī.

*v.l. At the confluence of Kubjā with Narmadā.

14. In the Kṣetra (holy centre) of Bhṛgu, there are a crore of Tīrthas. In Bhārabhṛti there are a hundred and eight Tīrthas.

15. There are a hundred and fifty Tīrthas in Akrūreśa and hundred thousand in Vimaleśa. In the sphere of Narmadā, the number of Tīrthas is one and a half crores.

16. O splendid-faced lady, there are ten Tīrthas of the sun, nine of Kapila and eight of Vidhu (the Moon god). There are a crore and eight Tīrthas of Nandin.

17. O Mohinī, there are seven Tīrthas in each of these holy spots namely Nāgāvarta, Agnyāvarta and Siddhāvarta and there are five Tīrthas named Kedāradaiva, Indriyadaiva, Vāridaiva, Iśadaiva and Nandi daiva.

18-19. The following are mentioned to be of four Tīrthas in each Viz : Yameśa, Vaidyānātha, Vāmana, Aṅgārakeśvara, Sārasvata, Munīśa, Dārukeśa and Gautama. There are three Tīrthas at Vimaleśvara. There are then the Tīrthas of Sahasrayajña, Bhīṣmeśa and Svarṇa Tīrtha.

20. The following are great Tīrthas viz. Dhautapāpa, Karañjeśa Ṛṇamuktiguha, Daśāśvamedha, Nanda, Manmatheśa and Bhārgava.

21-23. O auspicious lady, each of these is a great Tīrtha Parāśara, Ayoni, Vyāsa, Pitṛnandi, Gopeśa, Māruteśa, Jaṅgaleśa, Śuklaka, Akṣarcśa, Pippaleśa, Māṇḍavyeśvara, Dīpakeśvara, Uttareśa, Aśokeśa, Yodhaneśa and Rauhiṇa, Lokeśa is said to be two in nnmber. There are one thousand nine hundred individual Tīrthas, O fair one.

24. In groups there are two hundred and four hundred Tīrthas. There are Tīrthas pertaining to Śiva. The Tīrthas pertaining to Viṣṇu are twentytwo.

25. All these Tīrthas pertain to Brahmā; twentyeight Tirthas pertain to Śakti. Among them, O splendid-faced lady, seven pertain to Mothers and three to Brāhmī.

26. There are two Tīrthas of Vaiṣṇavī. O gentle lady, Raudrī (among the Mothers) is stationed in the remaining Tīrthas. O splendid-faced lady, one Tīrtha is mentioned as that of Kṣetrapāla.

27. O Mohinī, three and a half crores of Tīrthas have been mentioned by Vāyu. They are intermediary Tīrthas. Some are hidden and some manifest.

28-29a. These Tīrthas are in the Revā (Narmadā) region on the ground, in the atmosphere or in the heaven. The man who takes a holy dip anywhere in these Tīrthas, O blessed lady, becomes pure in soul and attains excellent goal.

29b-30a. Holy dip, charitable gift, Japa, Homa, the study of the Vedas and the worship of the deity, everything performed on the banks of Narmadā has everlasting benefits.

30b-31a. The waters of Sarasvatī sanctify in three days. O chaste lady, the waters of Yamunā sanctify in seven days. The waters of Gaṅgā are meritorious even in a single dip; but the waters of Narmadā are holy even by their sight.

31b-32a. Thus, O gentle lady, the multitudes of Tīrthas on Narmadā have been listed. These Tīrthas suppress great sins of those who remember them.

32b-35. The man who hears about these Tīrthas, he who narrates and he who reads this list, O gentle lady, is liberated from sins. There is no fear of pestilence, or from arson in the house where these names of Tīrthas have been written down and are revered too. There is no fear from kings, thieves and enemies, nor from sickness. That house is filled with fortune, riches and food-grains perpetually. It is always joyous and auspicious through the marriage and other celebrations of sons, grandsons etc.

CHAPTER SEVENTYEIGHT

The Glory of Avanti

Mohini said :

1. O Brāhmaṇa, very wonderful is this greatness of Narmadā. It has been heard by me as it was described by you. It is destructive of sins.

2. O blessed holy lord, now tell me the greatness of Avantī[1] and that of Mahākāla worthy of being adored by the Devas.

Vasu said :

3. O gentle lady, listen. I shall recount the greatness of Avanti. If duly glorified, it yields merit unto men and destroys their sins.

4. The grove Mahākālavana is meritorious. It is an excellent place for penance. Lord Mahākāla is perpetually engaged in penance there.

5. There is no other holy centre on the earth greater than Mahākālavana. O gentle lady, by visiting it, a man competes with the deities.

6. O lady of beautiful eyes, by taking a holy dip in the Tīrtha named Kapālamocana, with devotion, even a Brāhmaṇa-slayer becomes sanctified.

7. Similarly, by worshipping the deity called Kālakāleśa, the man gains victory in disputes and always succeeds in his undertakings.

8. There is another Tīrtha here viz : the Apsaraḥkuṇḍa. The man who plunges therein shall become blessed and enjoy all worldly pleasures. He shall be like Kandarpa (cupid) himself.

9. One who takes a holy dip in the Kuṇḍa called Mahiṣa shall conquer the enemies in battle. One who takes a holy dip in the lake Rudrasaras is honoured in the world of Rudra.

1. Avanti is the region with Ujjayini as its capital, though later on they were identified. It is known since the time of Pāṇini. The NP. states that in different Yugas it was known under different names such as Amarāvatī, Kuśasthalī, Kanaka śṛṅgā, Padmāvatī, Kumudvati and Ujjayinī. It is associated with Mahākāla, a famous *jyotir-liṅga*. The fight between god Śiva and Andhakāsura took place in the Mahākālavana in (the country called) Avantī. A number of sub-Tīrthas are mentioned in the NP. with the usual recommendations of bath, Tarpaṇa, Dāna, Śrāddha etc. The *SKP.* has devoted one Volume (*Khaṇḍa*) to describe the great sanctity of Avantī.

10. By visiting Kuṇḍaleśvara and by worshipping the deity in accordance with the injunctions, the devotee gains in business and activities and becomes a favourite of Śiva.

11. By taking a holy dip in the Tīrtha called Vidyādhara, the man becomes purified. By worshipping Mārkaṇḍeśvara the devotee becomes rich and long-lived.

12. If a man worships goddess Śītalā stationed in Kālavana, he need never fear swelling boils (smallpox).

13. By visiting the holy centre Svargadvāra, by taking a holy bath and by worshipping Sadāśiva, a man never attains wretchedness. He is honoured in the heavenly world.

14. By visiting the holy centre Rājasthala and taking a holy dip in the oceanic Tīrtha, the devotee attains the excellent benefit of holy ablution in all the Tīrthas.

15. By taking a holy bath in the tank of Śaṅkara, the man of regular holy observances attains desired pleasures and in the end goes to the city of Rudra.

16-17. By worshipping Śaṅkarāditya, a man shall be invincible. By taking a holy dip in the Nīlagaṅgā and by devoutly worshipping goddess Gandhavatī, the man is liberated from all sins. By taking a holy dip in Daśāśvamedha, one attains the benefit of a horse-sacrifice.

18. By visiting the shrine of the goddess Ekānaṁśā (?), and by worshipping the goddess of Devas with scents, fragrant flowers etc. one attains the desired benefits.

19-20a. By worshipping Harasiddhi a man shall be a lord of all Siddhis. By worshipping the fourteen deities beginning with Piśācaka, a man obtains the desired benefits. No doubt need be entertained in this regard.

20b-21. The man who takes a holy dip in the lake of Rudras and worships Hanumatkeśvara with faith, shall attain riches. By worshipping Vālmīkeśvara, one shall become a storehouse of all lores.

22. The man who worships Śukreśvara and other Liṅgas faithfully shall be richly endowed with worldly pleasures and shall be free from ailments.

23. By worshipping Pañceśāna, a man shall attain all Siddhis. By roaming over Kuśasthalī, the devotee attains the desired benefit.

24. By worshipping Akrūreśa, one attains fearlessness from cruel persons and beings. By taking a holy plunge in Mandākinī, one shall attain the benefit of a holy dip in the Gaṅgā.

25. By worshipping Aṅkapāda, a man shall become an attendant of Śiva. By worshipping Candrāditya, one shall attain different worldly pleasures.

26. By worshipping Karabheśvara, one shall attain happiness of vehicles. By worshipping Laḍḍukapriya Vighneśa (Vighneśa fond of sweets) one shall be happy.

27-28a. By worshipping Kusumeśa and others, one enjoys all pleasures. By taking a holy dip in the Yajñavāpi and by worshipping Mārkaṇḍeśa, the man obtains the benefit of all Yajñas. He stays in heaven for the period of a Yuga.

28b-29. O chaste lady, by taking the holy dip in the Somavatī and by worshipping Someśvara, the man obtains the desired benefits both here and hereafter. O Mohinī, by worshipping in Yātanākalana, the man never faces tortures in hell.

30-31. By worshipping Narakeśa, one attains the goal of heavenly world. By worshipping Kedāreśa, Rāmeśvara, Saubhāgyeśa and Narāditya, the devotee obtains the desired benefit. By worshipping Keśavārka, the man shall be a favourite of Keśava.

32-34a. By taking a holy dip in Śaktibheda, one is liberated from terrible and difficult calamities. By taking a holy dip in Svarṇakṣura Brahmavāpī and by worshipping Abhayeśvara and Agastyeśa, O daughter of Brahmā, one shall become the abode of all riches. The man who perfectly worships Oṁkāreśa and other Liṅgas, shall obtain all desires. Thanks to the grace of Maheśa.

34b-35a. O gentle lady, there is no limit to the number of Liṅgas in Mahākālavana. By worshipping any Liṅga situated anywhere, one shall be a favourite of Śiva.

35b-36. The names of Avanti are Kanakaśṛṅgā, Kuśasthalī, Avantikā, Padmāvatī, Kumudvatī and Ujjayinī. In every Kalpa it has a different name. It is called Viśālā and Amarāvatī as well.

37. The man who takes bath in Śiprā river and worships Maheśa, shall attain his cherished desires, thanks to the grace of the deity.

38-39a. By taking a holy dip in the Gomatī Kuṇḍa the man obtains heavenly goal. By taking a holy dip in Vāmana Kuṇḍa, by eulogising Śrīdhara, the lord of all Devas, by uttering his thousand names, a man shall become Hari himself on the earth.

39b-40a. He who takes a holy dip in the lake Vīreśa-saras and worships Kālabhairava, enjoys riches and attains Śiva's world.

40b-41a. He who visits Kuṭumbeśvara and worships him with various means of service, achieves his different cherished desires, and in the end achieves heavenly goal.

41b-42a. He who worships Devamādhava in the Devaprayāgasaras derives devotion for Mādhava and attains the region of Viṣṇu.

42b-43a. O chaste lady, he who takes a holy bath in the Tīrtha of Karkarāja with controlled mind, shall be rid of all ailments. He shall become rich and enjoyer of pleasures.

43b-44. The man who faithfully worships Vighneśa Bhairava, Umā, Rudras, Ādityas and other Devas in the course of his pilgrimage in the Antargṛha (?) with whatever means that are available, shall gain heavenly world.

45-46. O lady, there are many other Tīrthas in Rudrasaras. By worshipping Śaṅkara in them, the man shall be happy. By taking a holy dip in the Aṣṭatīrthī (collection of eight Tīrthas), the man obtains the benefit of pilgrimage to Kālāraṇya. O daughter of Brahmā, truth, it is the truth that has been mentioned by me.

47. Thus everything in regard to the greatness of Avanti has been narrated. By listing to the greatness of Avanti, the man is liberated from all sins.

CHAPTER SEVENTYNINE

The Greatness of Mathura

Mohinī requested :

1. O Vasu, the greatness of Avantī that is destructive of sins of men, has been heard. Now I wish to hear the greatness of Mathura.[1]

Vasu said :

2. O Mohinī, listen. I shall recount the greatness of Mathura that is conducive to auspiciousness. It was here that the lord was born on being requested by the lotus-born deity Brahmā.

3. After manifesting himself there, the lord went over to the cowherds' colony of Nanda. Staying there, he played all games in the company of young cowherds.

4. After killing demons beginning with Pūtanā, sent by Kaṁsa, he sported in the twelve forests along with the cowherdesses.

5. O Mohinī, listen. Now I shall recount to you those Tīrthas that are in the forests and in the area of Mathura.

6. The first forest[2] is what is called Madhuvana. By taking a holy bath there and performing the Tarpaṇa rites

1. Being a Vaiṣṇava Purāṇa, the NP naturally concludes with the descriptions of Mathura and Vṛndāvana. Mathura is famous since the 6th century B.C., as we get references in the *Aṅguttara* (I. 167) and *Majjhima* (II. 84) Nikāyas to Buddha's direct disciple Mahā-Kaccāyana preaching in Mathura. Excavations at Mathura reveal that in addition to Brahmanism, and Buddhism, Jainism also flourished at Mathura. The *Vā. P* 99.383, *VP.* V. 6. 28-40, *AP.* 11. 8-9 mention it but it is glorified in details in Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas like *V. P.* V VI *aṁśa*, *Bh. P.* X Skandha. The NP. being a Vaiṣṇava Purāṇa describes it as a Tīrtha. The NP. uses two terms—*Mathura Maṇḍala*, the country round Mathura within the radius of twenty Yojanas in the middle of which the town of Mathura is situated (VV. 20-21.)

2. VV. 6-18 enumerate 12 forests round Mathura—now mere names only. The NP. describes the fruits of religious acts performed in each forest.

unto the Devas, sages and Pitṛs, the excellent man is honoured in the world of Viṣṇu.

7. O gentle lady, the second excellent forest is what is called Tāla. The man who takes a holy bath there with devotion, has all his objectives in life accomplished.

8. O lady of beautiful eyes, the third one is what is called Kumuda. By taking a holy bath there, the devotee attains cherished desires and rejoices here and hereafter.

9. The fourth one is glorified by the name of Kāmyavana. It contains many Tīrthas. By visiting it one attains the world of Viṣṇu.

10. There is an excellent Tīrtha called Vimala Kuṇḍa. It is the most excellent of all Tīrthas. O gentle lady, the man who takes a holy dip there, attains the region of Viṣṇu.

11. The fifth forest that is destructive of sins, is called Bahula. By taking a holy ablution, the man attains all desires.

12. There is the sixth forest named Bhadravana. The man who takes a bath here, sees everything auspicious, thanks to the grace of lord Kṛṣṇa.

13. O gentle lady, the seventh forest is Khādira Vana. Merely by taking a holy dip here, the man attains that greatest region of Viṣṇu.

14. The eighth forest is Mahāvana most liked by Hari. By visiting it with devotion, the man is honoured in the world of Indra (i.e. heaven).

15. The ninth forest is Lohajaṅgha. The man who takes a holy bath there, attains worldly pleasures and salvation, thanks to the grace of Mahāviṣṇu.

16. O lady of beautiful waist, Bilva is the tenth forest. He who takes a holy dip there, goes to the world of Śiva or Viṣṇu as he pleases.

17. The eleventh forest is Bhāṇḍīra, most liked by the Yogins. The man who devoutly takes a bath there, is liberated from all sins.

18. Vṛndāvana is the twelfth one. It destroys all sins. O chaste lady, there is no other forest equal to this on the surface of the earth.

19. The man who takes a holy bath there and performs Tarpaṇa to the Devas, sages and Pitṛs, becomes liberated from the three-fold indebtedness. He is honoured in the world of Viṣṇu.

20. The precincts of the holy centre Mathura extend to twenty Yojanas (240 kms). If any person takes a holy bath anywhere within this area, he shall attain devotion to Viṣṇu.

21. Within it, is the city named Mathura. It is the most excellent of all cities. Merely by seeing it, one obtains devotion to Viṣṇu.

22. O queen of men, there is a jewel among Tīrthas named Viśrānti.[1] The man who devoutly takes a holy dip there, attains the region of Viṣṇu.

23. Near Viśrānti and to the south of it, is the excellent Tīrtha viz. Vimukta. It is certain that the man who devoutly takes bath there attains liberation.

24. O queen of the people, still south of it, is the Rāma Tīrtha. The man who takes a holy bath there shall certainly be liberated from the bondage of ignorance.

25. To the south of this, is the excellent Tīrtha called Saṁsāra Mokṣaṇa. A man who takes a holy dip there, is honoured in the world of Viṣṇu.

26. To the south of this is the Tīrtha called Prayāga. It is difficult of access even to the Devas. O gentle lady, the man who takes a holy dip there shall obtain the benefit of Agniṣṭoma.

27. Thereafter, is the Tīrtha Kanakhala. O chaste lady, the man who takes a holy bath there, attains heaven.

After death he rejoices in the Nandana Park and other places.

1. VV. 22 ff describe various Tīrthas in this region, declare the religious merits accrued from bath etc. in those Tīrthas. The *Viśrānti Tīrtha* is Viśrāma Ghāṭ. Here Kṛṣṇa is supposed to have taken rest after killing Kaṁsa. Various *Tīrthas* reminding one of other famous independent Tīrthas like Prayāga, Kanakhala are also included in the list of sub-Tīrthas at Mathura. The usual formula of bath, *Japa* etc. is recommended at each Tīrtha.

28. To the south of it is the holy centre Tinduka. The excellent man who takes a holy bath there attains the benefit of Rājasūya sacrifice. He rejoices in heaven like a Deva.

29. Beyond that is the holy centre Paṭusvāmi Tīrtha. It is a favourite of the Sun-god. By taking a holy bath and seeing the Sun, the devotee enjoys all worldly pleasures and goes to heaven.

30. O gentle lady, to the south of it is the excellent Dhruva Tīrtha. By taking a holy bath and by having a sight of Dhruva (pole star), the devotee obtains the region of Viṣṇu.

31. Beyond Dhruva Tīrtha, to the south of it is the Tīrtha frequented by seven sages. By taking the holy plunge and by visiting the sages, the devotee rejoices in the world of sages.

32. To the south of Ṛṣitīrtha is the excellent Mokṣa Tīrtha. Merely by taking a holy bath therein, one is liberated from all sins.

33. To the south of it is Bodhinī Tīrtha. The man who takes a holy dip there and offers Piṇḍa to the Pitṛs leads them to the heaven.

34. To the south of it is Koṭi Tīrtha. By taking the bath therein, a man is liberated from all sins. He shall attain the world of Viṣṇu.

35. To the northern side of Viśrānti is the holy centre Asikuṇḍaka. O gentle lady, the man who takes a holy bath there attains the region of Viṣṇu.

36. O lady of beautiful eyes, Nava Tīrtha is to the north of Asikuṇḍa. By taking a holy dip there, the man is honoured in the heavenly world.

37. The Tīrtha called Saṁyamana is situated to the north of it. By taking a holy dip therein and offering charitable gifts, the devotee does not see the world of Yama.

38. To the north of it there is a great Tīrtha Dhārāyatana. By taking the holy bath therein, the man rejoices in the company of ancestors.

39. To the north of it is the Nāga Tīrtha. O Mohinī, by taking a holy dip therein the devotee derives fearlessness,

protection from the serpents. He is honoured in the heavenly world.

40. To the north of it is the Tīrtha named Brahmaloka-Ghaṇṭābharaṇaka. By means of a holy dip this Tīrtha dispels all sins. It bestows the goal of the world of Brahmā.

41. To the north of this is the great Tīrtha named Soma. He who takes a holy plunge in it, attains the world of Soma (Moon). Rid of sins he becomes the most excellent of men.

42. O auspicious lady, one should take a holy bath in Prācī Sarasvatī which is to the north of it. Merely by taking a holy dip there, the man shall become the lord of speech.

43. To the north of it is the Cakra Tīrtha. The man who takes a holy dip there, conquers hosts of his enemies and rejoices in heaven for the period of seven Yugas.

44. O blessed lady, the Tīrtha Daśāśvamedha is situated to the north of it. By taking a holy dip therein, one shall attain the benefit of a horse-sacrifice.

45. By worshipping Śiva designated Gokarṇa, in accordance with the injunctions, the man attains his cherished desires. In the end he is honoured in the world of Śiva.

46. To the north of it is situated the Tīrtha named Vighna-Rāja. By taking a holy bath there one shall attain the benefit of his holy rites without an obstacle.

47. To the north of it is the Tīrtha named Ananta. The man who takes a holy bath there shall attain the benefit of twentyfour Tīrthas of Mathura.

48. O blessed lady, Lord Hari himself is stationed in Mathura, in the form of Caturvyūha (four manifestations of Viṣṇu). He is the bestower of liberation on the citizens of Mathura.

49. The four manifestations are : one is the form of Varāha (the Divine Boar), another one is called Nārāyaṇa; the third form is called Vāmana and the fourth is Haladhara (i.e. Saṅkarṣaṇa).[1]

1. This is another variety of the Vyūha Theory including Varāha, Nārāyaṇa, Vāmana and Saṅkarṣaṇa as the four *Vyūhas*.

50. By visiting the lord of the four Vyūhas and by worshipping him in accordance with the injunctions, man attains liberation.

51. By visiting and duly worshipping Raṅgeśa, Bhūteśa, Mahāvidyā and Bhairava, the devotee shall attain the benefit of the pilgrimage.

52. By taking a holy dip in the Catuḥsāmudrika (where four oceans meet), the well of Kubjā and Gaṅgā called Kṛṣṇā and of the lord of Gaṇas (attendants), the devotee is liberated from all sins.

53. O auspicious-faced lady, lord Keśava, the destroyer of all miseries presides as the overlord of the entire zone called Mathura.

54. O gentle lady, if one does not see Keśava in the sacred zone of Mathura, one's life becomes purposeless. He will drift about in the ocean of worldly existence.

55-56. O splendid-faced lady, there are many other numerous Tīrthas there. By taking a holy dip therein and by giving something to the people staying there, a man wards off a wretched state. He does not go to hell. The truth has been stated to you. He who narrates or listens to the greatness of Mathura attains devotion to Hari and (thereafter) attains all cherished desires.

CHAPTER EIGHTY

The Glory of Vṛndāvana

Mohinī requested :

1. O bestower of honour, the greatness of Mathura and the forests has been heard. Tell me a little about the secret of Vṛndāvana too.

2. O Brāhmaṇa, Vṛndāvana is, as it were, the glory of the earth preserved in secret. I desire to hear about it. Narrate it to me in detail.

Vasu said :

3. O gentle lady, listen to the esoteric secret from me about Vṛndāvana. After acquiring it from the excellent preceptor, it has never been recounted by me to anyone.

4. O gentle lady, the secret of the lord of the cowherdesses had been communicated to my preceptor by Nārada of great soul. But it had been at first confided to Nārada by Vṛndā.

5-6. That I shall recount to you as it is conducive to the uplift of the universe. On one occasion, Nārada, the dear friend of the lord, was wandering over the worlds. He reached Vṛndāvana and stopped on the banks of the lake Puṣpasaras.

O gentle lady, it is situated in the north-west sector of the sacred place Mathura.

7. A fourth part of Vṛndāvana is the secret rendezvous of the lord of cowherdesses. The mountain Govardhana is also there near the Sakhīsthala. (the rendezvous of his friend).

8. That is the penance grove of Vṛndā. It is in Nandigrāma near the Yamunā. O chaste lady, the beautiful Vṛndāvana is on the charming banks of the Yamunā.

9. O blessed lady, the highly meritorious Puṣpasaras lake is also there. On the same beautiful bank is the hermitage of Vṛndā which is extremely conducive to pleasure.

10-11. It is here that Hari takes rest every day at midday along with his woman friends. Nārada resorted for a short while in the cool shade of a tree. He drank the cool water of the lake Puṣpasaras after performing the midday holy rites. He sat on the bank of the lake.

12. Even as Nārada sat watching, O Mohinī, cowherds and cowherdesses came into that beautiful hermitage of Vṛndā in groups and in groups they went away.[1]

13. For the period of a Yāma (three hours) he stayed there thus, when the day was short of half a Prahara he entered the wonderful hermitage.

1. VV. 12-33 describe how Nārada who wanted to know the Secret of Love-devotion to Kṛṣṇa, was changed into a woman and enjoyed by Lord Kṛṣṇa.

14. Vṛndā, the gentle lady devoted to the love of Kṛṣṇa was staying there receiving the visitors and extending hospitality to them with fruits etc.

15. O gentle lady, on seeing that ascetic woman, Nārada who was highly esteemed by saintly persons, bowed down to her, with great humility. He sat on the bare ground.

16. At the end of her meditation and Yogic practice, Vṛndā opened her eyes. She offered a seat to Nārada who was the guest.

17. Desirous of knowing the secret of the lord of cowherdesses (i.e. Kṛṣṇa) from her, Nārada stayed there on being respectfully honoured by Vṛndā.

18. The son of Brahmā (i.e. Nārada) accepted the hospitality extended by her. Knowing that she was delighted in her mind, he informed her of his heart-felt desire.

19. Having gauged his desire of knowledge with her Yogic power and meditation, O beautiful lady, she sent for her friend named Mādhavī and told her :

20. "O Mādhavī, see that Nārada, the great soul, realizes his desire so that the meritoriousness of myself and this hermitage is enhanced.

21. If one does not carry out the loving request of a visitor to the hermitage, it is in vain. It is comparable to a jackal's den.

22. At the behest of her mistress Vṛndā, Mādhavī, the good lady, took Nārada to the excellent bank of a lake.

23-25a. She directed him to take his holy bath facing the north-west. Then, O gentle lady, at the behest of that lady, Nārada of divine vision dipped himself into the water meditating on Śrīkṛṣṇa's contact. When the excellent sage Nārada plunged into the lake, the lady Mādhavī went back to Vṛndā, O gentle lady, after completing her task of carrying out his wish.

25b-26a. Nārada came out of the water after the plunge and found himself in the form of a woman. It was very surprising.

26b-27. Nāradī (the lady Nārada) smilingly glanced all round and saw a woman stationed in the north-east. She was beautiful and was bedecked in excellent ornaments. She was

beckoning with the gesticulations of her hand to Nāradī to come towards her.

28. Nāradī was called by her and so she went near that lady. After instilling confidence into her, she was taken to another place.

29. Nāradī was taken by the lady to a certain chamber full of woman and ornamentally decorated with gems and jewels. The lady withdrew thereafter and Nāradī was received duly by those women.

30. She was received by the groups of companions, Viśākhā etc. After consoling her, O gentle lady, she was taken within the inner chamber by a maid. There Nāradī saw the lord of the cowherdesses.

31. When the messengers returned, Nāradī was called by the lover of cowherdesses. After bowing down to the lord, she went near him bashfully.

32. The man of taste (Lord Kṛṣṇa) embraced her, had the sportful dalliance with her and then dismissed her. Gradually she came once again to the lake Puṣpasaras.

33. She was then made to plunge into the lake on the south-west side. Nārada then regained his manhood. He was surprised at it.

34. At the behest of Vṛndā, Nārada performed a penance in the south-eastern side of the lake in an isolated spot and stayed there eagerly to see that (?).

35. Nārada thus continued his penance sustaining himself with the fruits sent by Vṛndā.

36. Once Nārada was moving about here and there within his hermitage. He heard some charming sound uttered by some lady.

37. On hearing it, Nārada of a spiritual vision became curious. He searched the forest but could not see any trace of the person.

38. Surprised much at this, he respectfully asked Vṛndā about it. She narrated to him the story of the Kubjā (hump-backed lady) from the beginning.

39. This hump-backed lady is stationed in a house underground. She is the excellent beloved of the lord. In an isolated place, she receives her Lord and renders service to him to his heart's content.

40. O excellent sage, excepting me no one knows her. Hence I shall succinctly narrate. It is because you were desirous of seeing her that you performed the penance.

41. Early in the morning, Kṛṣṇa was wakened up by his mother. He took his bath and breakfast. Followed by his friends he went to the forest for grazing the cows. In that connection he entered Vṛndāvana.

42. He spent his time sporting about along with his friends (the cowherds) and preventing the cows (from straying). He entered my hermitage along with his two or three dear friends.

43. Propitiated by means of fruits, roots and other edibles offered by me, he used to sleep along with his beloved lady in the calf-shed covetable by everyone.

44. The cowherd fond of cowherds' colony was served by his intimate lady friend Rādhā. Thus, he used to sport about in different bowers severally for a period of about four hours and a half.

45. While he was asleep there, he was fanned by Rādhā and others. Within a Yāma and a half, he himself used to wake up and honour his beloved ones.

46-47. Surrounded by cowherds and cows, he delightedly used to go back to the cowherds' colony in the evening. His female friends used to take Rādhā[1], his beloved to the spot called Sakhī-Sthala. Every day the beautiful ladies of large eyes, used to go to their own houses along with her. Coming to and fro like this sportingly, he frequented that place everyday.

48. He is seen, O dear one, only by me and not by god Brahmā, Śiva and others. O dear one, the grandeur of the rendezvous of the hump-backed lady was not observed even by me.

49. I know it through the utterance of the delighted lover. I am telling you a secret that should be well guarded as well. She got this excellent rendezvous through the merit accruing from the offer of unguents to Lord Kṛṣṇa.

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1. The author of the NP. regards Rādhā as the highest deity along with Kṛṣṇa. Rādhā the anonymous cowherdess—beloved of Kṛṣṇa in the Bh. P. has attained topmost eminence in pre-Jayadeva period in East India (Bengal-Orissa region). Hence this chapter is the crowning piece of the NP.

50-52. She was always eagerly occupied in Kṛṣṇa's service. She was alone and he too was alone. But there are hundred crores of similar couples imitating Kubjā and Kṛṣṇa and engaged in different kinds of dalliance. Born of the first pair they enliven the immobile ones as well. Though they are devoid of going (out of existence ?) and coming (into existence), they are still ever fresh and new (?) (Defective) that is unapproachable to the third person where the second person becomes united with one.[1]

53. O Brāhmaṇa, their form comprising in itself the origination, sustenance and dissolution of the universe is extraordinary. I alone know this. Having heard what has been heard you too know this.

54-55. A Mantra (what is secretly discussed) is burnt (doomed) if it reaches six ears. Follow (in practice) this saying. On hearing this highly inaccessible secret through the utterance of Vṛndā, sage Nārada thought of both. The sage acquired that great principle. O daughter of Brahmā, this is the subject-matter between a preceptor and a disciple.

56. They alone understand not anyone else. The same principle holds good in regard to us both. O auspicious lady, only one knows; there is only one hearer and he knows from one the speaker.

57. Hence, there is only one reality. There are not many things here. O highly-blessed lady, the secret of the lord of cowherdesses has been related to you.

58-60a. I shall narrate to you the open public behaviour of the lord. Listen with proper attention. O daughter of Brahmā, in the forest of Vṛndāvana, this Brahmakuṇḍa is highly meritorious. It is the place where Reality was clearly manifested to your father. The man who takes a holy dip there, pondering over the original dress and feature, visualizes a part of the grandeur of the Eternal Player.

60b-61a. O gentle lady, it is Govindakuṇḍa where Govinda was pondered over by Indra who understood the

1. This is the Advaita (non-dualism in Bhakti). This is the esoteric secret in the path of *Vaiṣṇava Bhakti*.

Tattva (the real principle). By taking the holy dip there one shall attain 'That'.

61b-62a. Where the Rāsa dance was begun by Kuñjavihārin (one who sports about in bowers i.e. Lord Kṛṣṇa) who assumed single as well as multifarious forms and danced with the cowherdesses, a Tīrtha has been formed of the same nature and efficacy. By taking a holy dip therein, one can realise the lord.

62b-63a. At the spot where Nanda and other cowherds saw the magnificence of the omnipresent Lord, is a Tīrtha called by the name Tattva-Prakāśa (Revealer of Reality). It is waters of Śrī Yamunā.

63b-64a. The place where the encounter with and pounding of Kāliya was shown to the cowherds is mentioned as a meritorious Tīrtha. It is destructive of sins of men.

64b-65a. The place where the cowherds were rescued from the forest fire along with their womenfolk, children, infants and wealth by Kṛṣṇa is a holy Tīrtha. which is destructive of sins by means of a holy dip therein.

65b-66a. A man who takes a holy dip in the place where demon Keśin who had assumed the form of a horse had been killed by Kṛṣṇa playfully, attains the abode of Viṣṇu.

66b-67a. The place where the wicked demon Vṛṣa was killed by him who thereby became pure, is well known as Ariṣṭakuṇḍa. It yields salvation merely through holy dip therein.

67b-69a. There are Tīrthas in the places where the demons Dhenuka, Agha, Baka, Vatsa, Vyoma and Lamba were killed by Kṛṣṇa sportively. By taking bath and by performing Tarpaṇa rites devoutly to the Pitṛs and the Devas, the devotee attains the desired benefits, thanks to the favour of Gopāla.

69b-70a. The places where he slept, took food, walked about, something was heard by him, or seen by him, or committed by him in an extraordinary manner are all Kṣetras (holy centres). They yield heavenly goal by means of a holy dip therein, O gentle lady.

70b-71a. Wherever he was heard, thought about, seen, bowed, embraced, eulogised or requested for by meritorious persons, there exists a Tīrtha that bestows salvation.

71b-72a. O gentle lady, the place where a terrible penance was performed by Śrīrādhā is Śrī Kuṇḍa which is highly meritorious for a holy dip, charitable gifts, Japa and other things.

72b-77. The holy place of Vṛndāvana extends to five Yojanas (60 kms.) all round and the following are the main Tīrthas : Vatsītīrtha, Candrasaras, Apsaras lake, Rudrakuṇḍa, Kāmakuṇḍa, the great temple of Harī, Viśālā (rich in merit by) having the Alakanandā, the beautiful Nīpakhaṇḍa, Dharmakuṇḍa, devoid of impurities, the spot of Kṛṣṇa's taking meals, the region of Bala, Bṛhatsānu, the place of rendezvous of Hari, Nandigrāma, Kuṇḍa (holy pool) of Kiśorī (girl), Kokilakānana (the forest of cuckoos), the milk ocean of Śeṣaśāyin, Krīḍādeśa (the place of sports), Akṣayavaṭa, Rāmakuṇḍa, Cīracaurya (the place where garments of cowherdesses were stolen by Kṛṣṇa), Bhadrabhāṇḍīrabilvaka, the sacred lake called Mana, the bank called Bhaktabhojana, the Akrūra Tīrtha, Tārkṣyagovinda and Bahulāraṇyaka. O auspicious lady, such is the holy centre Vṛndāvana.

78. It is very holy. It is resorted to by the meritorious persons. By its mere sight, it bestows salvation. Even the Devas desire for its view which is difficult of access (even to them).

79-80a. People are not competent to witness the interior sport even by means of penance. O beautiful woman, in all the three worlds, there is nothing difficult of access to that person who eschews attachment everywhere and resorts to Vṛndāvana.

80b-81a. O lady (dear to all), perpetual devotion to Nandanandana rises up even in a person who utters the name 'Vṛndāvana'.

81b-82. O Mohinī, in the holy Vṛndāvana, men, women, monkeys, worms, insects, locusts, birds, trees, deer, mountains always utter the names Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

83. I think that a visit to Vṛndāvana is difficult to those men who are overwhelmed by Kṛṣṇa's Māyā and whose minds are defiled by lust.

84. O auspicious lady, their lives have been rendered fruitful by those meritorious persons by whom Vṛndāvana has been visited. They deserve the compassion of Hari.

85. O daughter of Brahmā, of what use is much talk said and heard? The splendid and meritorious Vṛndāvana must be resorted to by those who desire to attain liberation.

86. Vṛndāvana must be seen, approached, resorted to and meditated upon always. There is nothing else on the earth that is as conducive to the enhancement of glory.

87. It was here that in an ancient Kalpa, a Brāhmaṇa named Govardhana performed a great penance after becoming detached from the entire world.

88. O gentle lady, the unchanging lord Viṣṇu, the lord of Devas, went to that place of his in order to grant the boon to that Brāhmaṇa.

89-92. The Brāhmaṇa saw the lord of gods thus; He was holding the conch, discus and iron club. The jewel Kaustubha was shining on his chest. His earrings had the shape of the shark. He had a good crown and beautiful bangles. He was bedecked in anklets that produced a sweet jingling sound. A garland of sylvan flowers was worn round his neck. There was a mark of Śrīvatsa on his chest. He was clad in a yellow silken garment. He had the lustre of a fresh cloud. His umbilicus, neck, cheeks, nose, teeth, knees, thigh, and the waist were all fine and beautiful. He was an ocean of mercy. He was joyous : His lotus-like face indicated his pleasure.

93. On seeing the lord, the Brāhmaṇa got up immediately and prostrated on the ground straight as a staff. On being asked, "Tell me the boon you wish to choose", Govardhana said to Hari :

94-96a. "Place your feet on my back and stand there. This is the boon I crave for". On hearing it, the lord thought over it again and again and finally stood on his back. Then the Brāhmaṇa said again : "O lord, O lord of the universe, I cannot approve of letting you come down from my back. Hence, be steady like this.

1. VV. 87-101 explain that the Govardhana hill so dear to Kṛṣṇa was originally a Brāhmaṇa who was devoted to Kṛṣṇa.

96b. Ever since that time, the lord, the Ātman of the universe did not abandon the Brāhmaṇa Govardhana who assumed the form of a mountain. In some cases he goes to Yogivana.

97-99. During the time of his incarnation as Kṛṣṇa, the lord knew that the Brāhmaṇa Govardhana had attained Sārūpya (the identity of form) with himself. Hence, he fed him through Nanda and others by means of a heap of cooked rice and milk. After propitiating the Brāhmaṇa turned into a mountain he realized that he was thirsty. So he made him drink from the fresh clouds. By this action he became a friend of Vāsudeva.

100. O gentle lady, the man who devoutly worships the mountain by means of services and circumambulates it, gets no rebirth.

101. The mountain Govardhana has become meritorious, thanks to the residence of Hari. If one visits this, he need not visit other holy mountains.

102. The sand-banks of the Yamunā are beautiful and rendered more so by the sports of Kṛṣṇa, O blessed lady, say yourself : Where else on the surface of the earth, can you see a holier place?

103. Hence, after abandoning other holy forests, rivers and mountains that yield merit unto men, Vṛndāvana should always be resorted to.

104. The river Yamī (Yamunā) is holy. The mountain Govardhana is holy. Hence, is there any forest on the earth holier than Vṛndāvana?

105. There is nothing else worthy of being resorted to by persons whose minds are deeply attached to worldly objects and who are afraid of the sins of Kali age. There is no other place in the three worlds but Vṛndāvana that is worthy of being resorted to.

106. In it Hari roams about all the while along with the cows, cowherds and cowherdesses. Peacock feathers adorn his crest. He has the form of an excellent dancer. Karṇikāra flowers adorn his ears. By the sound of his flute, the sound of the female swan is conquered (i.e. it excels it). Vaijayantī garland covers his body. He has acquired a number

of jewels from Nanda's person. He is the supreme soul called Haṁsa (swan) and Aham (?)

107. Giriśa (Śiva) who melts (i.e. is overwhelmed) with devotion, meditates on him day and night in the company of the daughter of the mountain (Pārvatī) in secret. He is indeed called Ardhanārīśvara. The lotus-born deity Brahmā keeps his wife Gāyatrī within the cavity of his heart. Indra looks at Śacī with his thousand eyes (?)

108. (Defective) A person who appreciates the taste but not a master of the ear confines his wife in a secret (isolated) place due to the fear of hearing the sound of the flute. What else is the popular talk? The flute (which was originally a piece of bamboo) underwent the process of cutting, drying, burning and perforation (?). Still it yearned to imbibe the nectar from the lips of the lord of cowherdesses.

109. How can I describe the good fortune of those Ballavīs (cowherdesses) accompanied by whom, the son of Nanda came to Vṛndāvana during the nights and sported in dalliance in the bowers brightly illuminated by the rays of the moon. Even the dust from their feet is not attainable to Śrī (Lakṣmī), Śiva, Brahmā and oth ers.

110. Even the grasses, deer, birds, worms and other living beings that have attained Vṛndāvana are worthy of being worshipped by Brahmā, Hara and Ramā (Lakṣmī). A person who comes there and is engaged in the nondualistic states (of the Lord) and who has attained Brahman-hood becomes happy in love and plays about immersed in the billows of the ocean of happiness.

111. There (in Vṛndāvana) wild beasts of prey forget their natural enmity and behave like friends and enjoy the bliss of Vṛndāvana. If one eschews this and goes elsewhere, can he be happy (in the world) that is a box of Kṛṣṇa's Māyā? Can a person who eschews lord of wealth and goes elsewhere get wealth?

112. That Vṛndāvana forest is the form of the merit of the whole world. Resorting to it, the darkness in my mind (is dispelled). I am able to excel the whole world and keep it permanently suppressed. At every step, the lord of the cow-herdesses is soaked in love. He does not differentiate between a

high born and a low born person, but uplifts all devotees irrespective of their states.

113. Lord Kṛṣṇa is prepared even to serve a devotee who remembers and sees the cowherds, cowherdesses, birds, deer, mountains and the dust of the land trodden by the cows and the cowherds and bows down. He is tied to them by means of the rope of love. Hence do not think of any other lord worthy of being resorted to, other than the lord of the cowherd's colony. O daughter of Brahmā I do not know any other such deity.

114-115. Thus the greatness of the forest of Vṛndāvana has been succinctly narrated to you, O daughter of Brahmā. There remains nothing to be recounted.

116. This alone should always be heard, glorified, remembered and meditated upon by sinless men afraid of worldly existence.

117. O daughter of Brahmā, the pure man who listens, to the greatness of Vṛndāvana and glorifies it, is undoubtedly Viṣṇu himself.

CHAPTER EIGHTYONE[1]

The Review of the Story of Vasu

Vasu said :

1. O blessed lady, attain everything that has been glorified in the section on the excellent greatness of the Tīrthas, by undertaking pilgrimage to the zones of Tīrthas (holy centres), O queen.

2. O queen of men, I shall invite Brahmā, your father, and going back to Vṛndāvana roam about along with the deer.

1. This chapter practically concludes the NP. by Nārada's reciting the deeds of Kṛṣṇa throughout his life. Vasu permanently stayed in Vraja on *hearing Kṛṣṇa's glory.*

Sūta said :

3. After saying thus to Mohinī, O Brāhmaṇas, Vasu, her priest was honoured and repeatedly worshipped. Thereafter, he went to the world of Brahmā.

4. After going there he bowed down to god Brahmā, the creator, the maker of the worlds and reported to him the complete details of Mohinī's activities.

5. On hearing the words of the Brāhmaṇa Vasu, O Brāhmaṇas, Brahmā was delighted. He said to him—" O dear one, indeed you have accomplished a meritorious work.

6. O Brāhmaṇa, the daughter of mine, Mohinī, who had been engaged by me for the purpose of Devas was unsuccessful in her mission. She was cursed by you and her destruction was effected.

7. Again, at my behest O dear one, she had been resuscitated to life by you now. She had been thus made contented and blessed. Hence who else can be more virtuous and fortunate than you?

8. The excellent news about Mohinī has been conveyed to me by you. Delighted thereby, O Brāhmaṇa, I shall grant you a boon. Tell me what you wish to have."

9. On being thus asked by Brahmā, the creator of the worlds, that Brāhmaṇa bowed to him and chose as boon (the facility) to reside in Vṛndāvana.

10. O leading sages, on hearing these words, the creator of the worlds, the remover of the anguish of those who seek refuge in him, spoke with smiles in all his four faces, 'so be it'.

11. Delighted in his mind, Vasu bowed down to Brahmā, came to Vṛndāvana and performed penance with concentration and mental purity.

12. O Brāhmaṇas, even as Vasu performed the penance, many years—More than five thousand years passed by. Thereafter Hari was delighted with it.

13. Accompanied by two or three of his most beloved cowherd friends he appeared before the excellent Brāhmaṇa and said—"Tell me, O Brāhmaṇa, what do you wish to choose? I am satisfied with your penance.

14. Thereafter, Vasu (prostrated himself before him) touching the ground with eight of his limbs. He got up subsequently and said—"O lord, I wish to stay in Vṛndāvana for ever".

15. O excellent Brāhmaṇas, Viṣṇu granted him his desire. Saluted by him again, the lord vanished.

16. Ever since that day the Brāhmaṇa stayed there assuming the forms he pleased. He pondered perpetually over the lord who was enthusiastic over the forest Vṛndāvana.

17. On one occasion, as he was seated on the banks of Yamunā, thinking about him (the lord), he saw Nārada. the son of Brahmā, who came to Vṛndāvana.

18. On seeing his grand preceptor (preceptor's preceptor) he bowed to him and asked him about the holy rites that were conducive to the increase of devotion to the lord.

19. On being earnestly asked by him thus, Nārada who had visualized the Self recounted to him the entire future deeds of Hari.

20. "O Brāhmaṇa, once I went to lord (Śiva) residing on the Kailāsa mountain; to visit him as well as to ask him about the future secret of Vṛndāvana.

21. Afterwards I bowed down to the lord of Devas surrounded by Siddhas. I bowed down to Maheśa whose greatness pervaded the entire sphere of the cosmic egg.

12-23. I asked him about the desired welfare. Lord Hara smilingly spoke to him—"O son of Brahmā, I shall tell you what has been formerly heard from the tongue of Surabhi (the divine cow) in regard to the future activities of Hari about which you have asked. Once Surabhi was seen by me staying in the middle of the world, Goloka.

24. She was accompanied by her progeny. She was delighted and affable mentally. Thereafter, the mother of cows, rich in milk was asked about the future events.

25-26. O divine sage, she told me the future history of Hari — "Now Lord Kṛṣṇa is seated comfortably in the Goloka accompanied by Rādhā.

27-28. O Maheśāna, he accords happiness to the cowherds and cowherdesses, O Śiva, once (sometime in future) he will appear on the world of earth, in the region of

Mathura and will display wonderful sport in Vṛndāvana. Rādhā the daughter of Vṛṣabhānu will angrily curse Śrīdāman who will be a great favourite of Hari and his friend, and who will be stationed at the threshold of Virajā's house (?) O blessed one, he too will curse Rādhā in return.

29-30. He will curse thus : "Go down to the mortal world". And thanks to this mutual course—afterwards requested Brahmā, Hari will attain earth for removing the burden of the earth. He will take birth in the house of Vasudeva and he will be called Vāsudeva. He will be the delighter of the Yādavas.

31. Afterwards due to the fear of Kaṃsa, he will go to the cowherds' colony of Nanda. After going there he will kill Pūtanā, the murderess of infants.

32. He will also kill the Dānava Cakravāta (the Cyclone) and the Asura Vatsa of huge body who will harass Devas.

33. He will subdue Kāliya, the serpent, and expel him out of Yamunā. He will kill Dhenuka of unbeareable prowess, Baka (crane) and also the demon asura Agha.

34-36a. He will kill Dāva, Pradāva as well as Pralamba. He will remove the pride and arrogance of Brahmā, Indra, Varuṇa and the erring sons of Dhanada (Kubera). The lord will kill the Asuras, Vṛṣa, Śaṅkhacūḍa, Keśin and Vyoma. Staying in Vraja (cowherd's colony) for eleven years, he will sport with the cowherdesses.

36b-38a. Going to Mathura, he will kill the washerman and straighten the humpbacked lady. He will break the bow and kill Kuvalayāpīḍa, the excellent elephant and the wrestlers Cāṇūra and others. Thereafter, Kṛṣṇa will kill Kaṁsa, his own maternal uncle.

38b-39a. He will release his imprisoned parents. After killing the king of Yavanas, and due to his fear of Jarāsandha, Kṛṣṇa will go to Dvārakā.

39b-40. The lord will then marry Rukmiṇī, Satyabhāmā, Satyā, Jāmbavatī, Kaikeyī, Lakṣmaṇā, Mitravindā and Kālindikā After killing Bhauma (i.e. the asura Naraka) he will marry sixteen thousand wives.

41. After killing Pauṇḍaka (the pretender Vāsudeva), Śiśupāla, Dantavaktra, Vidūratha, Śālva and Dvivida, he will kill Balvala.

42. Then he will kill, Vajranābha, Sunābha along with (the demons) the residents of Ṣaṭpuras (six cities), and the Daitya Triśarīra who will be powerful, thanks to the boons.

43. O Śiva, eager to remove the burden of the earth he will create causes for mutual quarrel and kill Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas.

44. He will make Yadus, members of his own family, quarrel and destroy one another and then will come back to his own abode accompanied by his followers.

45. O Śambhu, thus the future story of Hari has been recounted to you. Go, when Hari comes down to the surface of the world of mortals you will see everything".

46. O son of Brahmā, on hearing the words of Surabhi, I was much delighted and I came back to my own abode. This has now been mentioned to you by me".

47. On hearing the wotds of the trident-bearing lord conveyed by Nārada, Vasu was delighted much. He felt his hairs standing on their ends due to delight.

48. O excellent Brāhmaṇa, I sing about the lord. I am elated. With the string of the lute, I divert the dejected universe.

This future story has thus been narrated to you by me.

49a. Just as Gautama, I too am engaged in the welfare of the worlds".

Sūta said :

49b-50a. Nārada said this to Vasu, the Brāhmaṇa, and went away sounding his lute and pondering over the scion of the family of Yadu (i.e. Lord Kṛṣṇa).

50b-51. On hearing his words, Vasu was delighted in his mind. O Brāhmaṇa, he permanently stayed in the Cowherds' colony, Vraja.

CHAPTER EIGHTYTWO[1]

The Benefit of Listening to the Nārada Purāṇa

The sages said :

1. O Sūta, O virtuous saint, the nectar-like story of Śrī Kṛṣṇa recounted by you has been heard. We are blessed thereby, thanks to your favour.

2. What did Mohinī, the daughter of Brahmā do after Vasu had departed to the world of Brahmā. It behoves you to narrate it to us.

Sūta said :

3. O sages, hear ye all, the auspicious story of Mohinī, the pilgrimage she undertook afterwards to the holy centres.

4. In the manner indicated by Vasu, Mohinī, the daughter of Brahmā went to the banks of the celestial river (the Gaṅgā) in accordance with the injunctions for the pilgrimage.

5. After going there, the daughter of Vedhas (god Brahmā) took a holy bath therein and journeyed over the Gaṅgā and other holy rivers) with a delighted mind, in the company of Brāhmaṇas.

6. She resorted to each of the holy centres in the manner laid down by her preceptor Vasu and took the journey of pilgrimage.

7. In those Tīrthas she worshipped Viṣṇu and other deities. She offered different charitable gifts to the Brāhmaṇas.

1. This chapter is divided into two parts. Part I—VV. 3-22 describe the performance of pilgrimage to various sacred places by Mohinī. VV. 23 ff describe the period of *Vedha* (overlapping of *Tithis*) assigned to Mohini which should be avoided by the observer of the Ekādaśi fast.

VV. 29-49 describe the merit accrued by listening to the NP.

VV. 50 ff show the catholicity of outlook of the NP. *The one-ness non-duality*) *of Brahman is the main thesis of the NP.*

In V. 62, the author thanks his audience as it is due to them that he was reminded of Hari, 'the cause of all causes'

8. At Gayā, she duly offered Piṇḍa to her husband. After worshipping Viśveśvara at Kāśī she went over to the holy centre Puruṣottama (Jagannātha of Purī).

9. At that holy centre she partook of Naivedya of the lord of the universe and purified her body. She then reached the mountain Laksmaṇācala.

10. After duly worshipping at the shrine there, she went to Setu and worshipped Rāmeśvara. At Mahendra mountain, she paid obeisance to Bhārgava Paraśurāma.

11. O Brāhmaṇa, she went to the holy centre of Śiva, viz : Gokarṇa and worshipped Īśvara. Then along with those excellent Brāhmaṇas, she went to Prabhāsa.

12. She took a holy dip and performed Tarpaṇa rites for the Devas and others. After completing the pilgrimage, she visited Hari at Dvārakā and went to Kurukṣetra.

13. There also the queen of men duly fulfilled the prescribed rites of pilgrimage and came to Gaṅgādvāra where she took holy bath in accordance with injunctions.

14-15. After visiting and joyously bowing to Kāmodā, she reached Badaryāśrama and worshipped the sages Nara and Nārāyaṇa. She then hastened to visit Kāmākṣī. After bowing to Siddhanātha, she went to Ayodhyā.

16. After duly taking a holy dip in the Sarayū and after worshipping the lord of Sītā, she resorted to the pilgrimage of middle centres, she then went to Amarakaṇṭaka.

17. After worshipping Maheśa there, she went up the current of the Narmadā. After serving Oṁkāra and visiting Īśāna she went to Māhiṣmatī.

18-19a. After worshipping Tryambakeśa, she reached Tripuṣkara. After giving many charitable gifts at the Puṣkara in accordance with the injunctions, she reached Mathura, the most excellent of all excellent Tīrthas.

19b-21. She performed the inner pilgrimage (Ābhyantarī Yātrā) upto twenty Yojanas. (240 KMs.). After going all over the city, she visited Caturvyūha (the fourfold incarnation of the lord). After taking a holy dip in the Viṁśati Tīrtha, she concluded the circumambulation. To the citizens of Mathura, she gifted ten thousand cows, all richly adorned after

feeding them with excellent cooked rice and with her mind melting with devout feelings.

22. She bowed to them and bade farewell to them. She entered Kālindī the divine river that destroys sins.

23-25a. Therein she stabilised herself in the end of Yama's Tīthi. She has not emerged out of it till today. When Mohinī attains the point of sunrise she defiles all Smārta rites (rites laid down in Smṛtis). When Mohinī attains the point of Aruṇodaya (predawn), she defiles the Śrauta rites (those laid down in Śrutis) and when she attains the midnight point, she defiles Vaiṣṇava (pertaining to the followers of Viṣṇu) rites. The man must observe fast on the Ekādaśī day when there is no Vedha (overlapping of Tithi) of Mohinī and worship Viṣṇu on the Dvādaśī day. Thereby undoubtedly he goes to Vaikuṇṭha.

25b-26a. O Brāhmaṇas, goddess Mohinī was born of god Brahmā and Ekādaśī was born of Viṣṇu. It was due to a spirit of rivalry against Viṣṇujā, the daughter of Viṣṇu that Mohini was created by Brahmā.

26b-28. The saintly king Rukmāṅgada was devoted to Viṣṇu's loyal devotion. She was not competent enough to prevent him from the holy vow of Ekādaśi. When the king went to the world of Viṣṇu accompanied by his wife and son, Mohinī stationed at the end of Yama's Tithi, vies with Ekādaśi Tithi. Thus, O leading Brāhmaṇa, the story of Mohinī has been recounted by me.

29. I have told you this also viz, Why she was created by Brahmā and how she stationed herself there. Thus the latter half of the Nāradīya Purāṇa is recounted. It yields worldly pleasures and salvation.

30. In this work, Hari's devotion is achieved at every step of men. The Nāradīya Purāṇa is endowed with all the ten characteristics.

31. It is the effective cause of the four aims viz. virtue, wealth, love and liberation. The man who listens devoutly to this shall attain the region of Viṣṇu.

32-33. This is the eternal seed of all other Purāṇas. O excellent Brāhmaṇas, everything, viz.: Pravṛtta and Nivṛtta

(the worldly activities and their renunciation) has been mentioned in detail by the intelligent son of Parāśara. Nāradīya Purāṇa is full of superhuman stories.

34. It should not be imparted to anyone and everyone indiscriminately. It has been recounted to me by Vyāsa overlooking Paila and other disciples. He recounted this Nārada-saṁhitā to me and not to them.

35-36a. Obeisance to that Vedavyāsa who is identical with Viṣṇu, and who expounded the Nārada Saṁhitā i.e. the Nārada Purāṇa to me. It was Sanaka and other highly blessed sages who revealed this Purāṇa Saṁhitā to Nārada, the learned.

36b-38. The lord in the form of a swan had instructed the eternal Brahman enhanced by perfect knowledge to these sages. The same thing, Nārada of spiritual vision, revealed to sage Veda-Vyāsa. He told him the esoteric secret. This is difficult to be obtained in the world and it has been revealed by me.

39. To men who listen and narrate it is conducive to the fulfilment of fourfold aims of life. A Brāhmaṇa shall become the storehouse of the Vedas, a Kṣatriya will conquer the Earth.

40. A Vaiśya shall be richly endowed with wealth, a Śūdra shall be liberated from misery. This Saṁhitā is glorified as containing twenty-five thousand verses (?).

41. It consists of five Pādas (sections) as mentioned by Kṛṣṇa Dvaipāyana. When this is being heard, all doubts of men who are devotees with some specific desires are cleared.

42-44. Those men who are devoid of desires, are liberated. The devotees shall visit holy Tīrthas such as Naimiṣa, Puṣkara, Gayā, Mathurā, Dvārakā, the hermitage of Nara and Nārāyaṇa, Kurukṣetra, Narmadā and the holy centre Śrī Puruṣottama. He should then confine himself to a diet of Haviṣya (cooked rice soaked in ghee), should lie (sleep) on the bare ground. He should avoid sexual intercourse. He should conquer all the sense-organs. Thereafter, if he reads this Saṁhitā, he is liberated from the ocean of worldly existence.

45-46. Just as Ekādaśī is the most excellent of all holy vows, just as the Ganges is the holiest of all rivers, just as Vṛndāvana is the most excellent of all forests, just as Kurukṣetra is the most excellent of all holy centres, just as Kāśī is the most excellent of all cities, just as Mathura is the best of all holy Tīrthas, and just as Puṣkara is the holiest of all lakes, so also, O Brāhmaṇas, this is the best of all Purāṇas.

47. Devotees of Gaṇeśa, Sūrya, Viṣṇu, Śakti and Śambhu—all these are authorized in this Purāṇa whether they have any desire to fulfil or not.

48. Whether a man or a woman listens to this or narrates this with a specific desire in the mind, he or she shall certainly attain that.

49. By regularly reading the Nāradīya Purāṇa, one who is dejected due to ailments, shall be liberated from ailments.

One who is overwhelmed by fear, shall become fearless. He who is desirous of victory shall be victorious over the enemies.

50. Obeisance to that lord identical with all, the Ātman of all, who creates the universe in the beginning by the attribute of Rajas, who maintains it in the middle by the quality of Sattva and who swallows it in the end by the quality of Tamas.

51. Obeisance to that Brahmātman by whom the sages, Manus, Siddhas, guardians of the quarters and Prajāpatis, Brahmā etc., have been created.

52. One shall know that to be the real form of Ātman that is formless and identical with knowledge that form from which words recede and in whom the mind does not penetrate.

53. I salute that attributeless Being beyond darkness which has a wonderful form and by the truth of which this universe evolves and develops truly.

54. The lord is birthless, single and imperishable in the beginning, in the middle and in the end. He shines in different forms. I salute that unsullied Being.

55. This universe consisting of the mobile and immobile beings is born of the unsullied Being. That is the

truth, knowledge and non dualistic entity, that in which the world stands and is dissolved.

56-57. The followers of Śiva call that supreme Being Śiva, the knowers of the Sāṅkhya call him Pradhāna. O Brāhmaṇas, the Yogins call that Puruṣa, and the people who follow Mīmāṁsā call him Karman. The Vaiśeṣikas and others call him Vibhu, those who ponder over Śakti call him Cicchakti. I salute that non-dualistic Brahman that is the cause of different forms and activities?

58. Devotion of men to the lord facilitates the assumption of the lord's form. Who except a brute desires for other benefits after attaining that devotion.

59. O Brāhmaṇas, except through the association with the good, those worldly men who are averse to the lord cannot hope to gain liberation from the forest of worldly existence.

60. Virtuous men of good conduct are always conducive to the welfare of the worlds. O Brāhmaṇas, they are sympathetic towards the wretched ones. Indeed, they redeem those who seek refuge in them.

61. You are the most blessed sages in this world. You have gained approbation of the righteous ones since you glorify the renown of Vāsudeva, fresh at every time like the fresh tender sprouts.

62. I am lucky and blessed. I have been obliged by you all, since you have reminded me of Hari, the auspiciousness of the world, who is the cause of all causes.